

The Performance of Police Firearms Licensing Departments in England and Wales 2025

A statistical analysis and report by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation

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BASC
The British Association for Shooting & Conservation

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Glossary of abbreviations

ACC	Assitant Chief Constable
APP	Approved Professional Practice
BASC	British Association for Shooting and Conservation
BCH	Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Hertfordshire Consortium
CC	Chief Constable
CCA	Canonical Correspondence Analysis
CoP	College of Policing
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DCC	Deputy Chief Constable
FELWG	Firearms and Explosives Licensing Working Group
FLD	Firearms Licensing Department
FOI	Freedom of Information
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HMICFRS	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services
HO	Home Office
HSE	Health & Safety Executive
MP	Member of Parliament
NABIS	National Ballistics Intelligence Service
NCA	National Crime Agency
NDMM	National Decision Making Model
NFLMS	National Firearms Licensing Management System
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
Q1	Quarter 1. Normally April-June
Q2	Quarter 2. Normally July-September
Q3	Quarter 3. Normally October-December
Q4	Quarter 4. Normally January-March
TRT	Turnaround Time
UK	United Kingdon (Including Northern Ireland)

Executive summary

Inconsistencies in costs, low staffing levels and long turnaround times are still much in evidence. Delays, especially in issuing grants, are a particular problem. The recent increase in fees has reinforced the shooting community's view that it has a right to expect a good service. That reasonable expectation is not one that the police service can continue to ignore. The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) Firearms Licensing Survey identifies that delay is the single most significant factor in stakeholder dissatisfaction. The report identifies many of the same issues when compared with the last BASC report in 2022. This is regrettable. Many of those that operate firearms licensing resist recommendations for change.

Key points

1. Inconsistency is the hallmark of the system, creating a postcode lottery. Continuing issues include costs, resourcing, staffing, timeliness and internal force procedures.

2. Freedom of Information (FOI) figures and the BASC Firearms Licensing Satisfaction Survey demonstrate that delays, particularly with grants for new certificates which can exceed a year, remain a serious problem for some forces.

3. The efficiency and effectiveness of firearms licensing departments is primarily the result of internal force procedures and not the levels of financial resourcing and numbers of staff.

4. The number of certificates revoked and refused in some forces indicates poor management of risk and failure to follow the National Decision Making Model (NDMM).

5. There is a concern across the shooting sector that the police will discriminate against certificate holders if they complain.

6. There have been improvements in the national governance of firearms licensing, with mandated College of Policing (CoP) training, better transparency with regard to performance and an update to the CoP Approved Professional Practice (APP).

7. A BASC survey shows high levels of satisfaction with the performance of most forces' licensing departments. Satisfaction levels are mainly dependent on turnaround times.

8. Despite the inconsistencies, firearms licensing in England and Wales is highly effective at preserving public safety.



Introduction

In 2022 BASC produced its first report looking at the performance of the 42 firearms licensing departments (FLDs) in England and Wales. Previously, BASC had produced annual league tables based on the turnaround times for grants, renewals and variations in the forces. At the request of the chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Firearms and Explosives Licensing Working Group (FELWG), the report took a more holistic view, rather than simply focusing on raw statistics.

In the intervening three years, the landscape of firearms licensing has changed. This follows the tragic shootings in Plymouth in 2021 and the inquest held in 2023. This brought forward the release of the Home Office Statutory Guidance in November 2021, updated in February 2023. These events had not affected firearms licensing when BASC published its previous report. The greater scrutiny of both current and prospective certificate holders has undoubtedly impacted the cost and timeliness of processing certificates, and this is reflected in the current review.

There is considerably more information at the author's disposal than was the case in 2022. Since then, FELWG has collected performance data for the NPCC and BASC has had access to the figures for the last two quarters. BASC has also received the more comprehensive dataset produced by FELWG on each force, collated at the end of 2024. FOI requests have been sent to all forces, asking for data on departmental budgets and staffing levels. The response to the FOI requests has been unprecedented with 41 of the 42 forces in England and Wales responding. Only one force's FOI team, Greater Manchester, refused to release the data. In addition, BASC conducted a satisfaction survey of both members and non-members, recording quantifiable data on turnaround times and subjective views on FLDs. Lastly, there is the Home Office annual data on statistics for firearms certificates.



This report differs from the last in that each force, or consortium of forces, has an individual page. This records relevant data relating to the department, as well as comments from certificate holders and the experiences of BASC staff. Some of the data is coded red, amber and green for ease of comparison between forces.

The aims of this report are threefold:

- To provide a definitive qualitative and quantitative review of the current position of firearms licensing in England and Wales.

- To identify good practice and performance to assist strategic managers in their decision making.

- To be a reference point for the forthcoming thematic inspection of firearms licensing, to be conducted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

This report will be sent to chief constables (CCs) police and crime commissioners (PCCs) heads of FLDs, government ministers, MPs and other key stakeholders. It will also be available on the BASC website for wider reading.

Methodology

The following datasets were considered:

- The NPCC performance data from Q4 of 2024 and Q1 of 2025. This details total certificate holders, total applications in the last 12 months, percentage of applications completed within four months and the number of Section 7 temporary permits in existence.
- Previous NPCC performance data obtained under FOI. This contains a more expansive dataset and gives an in-depth perspective on the relative performance of forces.
- Responses from FOI requests to forces asking for the total number of full-time-equivalent staff working in the department, the breakdown of staff functions and the total budget for the FLD.
- The Home Office annual figures for total number of firearms certificates and shotgun certificates by force and the number of revocations for that force.
- The responses from the 5,000 plus certificate holders who responded to the BASC FLD satisfaction survey. This included data on the turnaround times for renewals and grants as well as subjective ratings of forces, accuracy of information provided by the FLD, communication with certificate holders and timeliness of service.
- Further datasets were calculated from these responses to estimate the number of certificates one would expect an FLD to process each year. In a five-year cycle, this gives the projected income, the number of certificates processed per-year per staff member and the cost per certificate. The latter was calculated by dividing the FLD budget by the annual certificate renewal number. Due to the extreme values recorded at the upper and lower ends of the scale any average is calculated as a median rather than a mean.
- A formal analysis of all the data was conducted by a BASC academic statistician working closely with the author.

Limitations

As with any report of this nature, information can be either incomplete, outdated or incorrectly recorded. Some forces which replied to the FOI requests were unable to furnish BASC with some of the data requested. This was particularly true of budgets. The Home Office data was from 2023-24 and is therefore 12 months out of date. The veracity of experiences recorded by certificate holders cannot be verified. The performance figures furnished by NPCC can be distorted by individual FLD's practices, such as recording a certificate as having been issued but delaying sending it to the applicant, or delaying entering an application once received on the system.

Scotland has a different firearms licensing management system and uses warranted officers as FEOs. It is therefore not comparable with the rest of England and Wales, although it is included in the satisfaction survey results. Northern Ireland has a different licensing system and firearms laws and is not included in the report.

Report results

Public safety

BASC is committed to a firearms licensing system that is effective at preserving public safety. It is in the interests of all involved in shooting that only suitable people are granted firearms and shotgun certificates.

It is argued by some involved in the firearms licensing system, that whether it prevents harm is the only measure of performance. Serious firearms crime in the UK is the lowest in western Europe. The use of legally held firearms in crime is negligible. The National Crime Agency (NCA) identify 65-70 per cent of serious crime discharges in the UK involve handguns. These have been banned, with limited exceptions, since 1997. Most of the remainder involve the use of sawn-off shotguns, 84 per cent of which were identified by the National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS) as being manufactured prior to 1988 when individual shotguns were recorded on the certificate. Most are likely to be from the illegal arms pool. Rifles, the guns most likely to be held on a firearms certificate, are almost never used in crime.

The misuse of legally held firearms is similarly low. The Home Office (HO) has recorded an average of 4.2 deaths a year over the past 11 years. This represents less than 1 in 15 million of the population and well below the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) 1 in 1 million threshold for preventative action. The suicide rate amongst certificate holders is the same as in the general population, so there is no statistical risk connected to firearms possession.

By any standards, firearms licensing is effective at preventing public harm. This has been further improved by the introduction of the Home Office Statutory Guidance in 2021.

Timeliness

In the last two quarters (Q4 of 2024 & Q1 of 2025), 31 of the police forces completed more than 80 per cent of applications within four months. This is the NPCC target and represents 72 per cent of forces in England and Wales.

It is the forces not achieving the NPCC target that cause concern. Some forces are well aware of the issues and have plans in place to resolve their current problems. The performance of others is deteriorating, and some fail to acknowledge they have a problem. The performance of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire (BCH), who have combined their FLDs, is lamentable. In the 2022 study, BCH was the top performing FLD in terms of timeliness. It now has hundreds of temporary permits issued, with hundreds more applicants who have not had their certificates renewed having to put their guns in storage. Grants in this FLD have been outstanding for more than two years.

CASE STUDY

Mr W, a former chief officer with Cambridgeshire Police, put in his renewal application to Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire FLD in sufficient time to secure an eight-week extension under Section 28B. Despite the extension, the certificate was not renewed, and a Section 7 permit was given to Mr W. Sometime later a fellow shotgun owner was in a similar position, but as he had not qualified for the Section 28B extension, he was refused a Section 7 permit and told he would need to secure his shotguns with an RFD or another certificate holder. Knowing that Mr W had an alarmed strongroom, he asked if he could store the shotguns there. Unsure as to whether that was possible on a Section 7 permit (it is not) both parties tried to contact the BCH FLD to clarify the legal situation. No response was forthcoming, and out of time the guns were stored with Mr W. BCH FLD was informed.

Two days later four officers, two armed, attended Mr W's home to seize the illegally held firearms. Fortunately, the officers on the ground took a more sensible, pragmatic approach, deciding that the guns were securely held and seizing them made no sense. The incident demonstrates the BCH FLD's warped sense of priorities when dealing with firearms licensing.

It should be noted that the figures obtained from NFLMS are only accurate if the system is updated at each stage of an application. For example, inputting applications at the start of the vetting process, rather than on receipt of application, or the issuing of certificates on NFLMS before they are sent out, will both skew the figures to reflect a shorter turnaround time than is actually the case. BASC has seen evidence of both these and other practices that affect the veracity of the data. The results of the BASC Survey, detailed below, confirm this picture.

Consistency

In all areas there is inconsistency between forces. This is clearly reflected in the costs of processing each certificate. Removing outliers, this varies from a low of £127 per certificate in Norfolk and Suffolk to a high of £347 in Durham. There is no correlation between performance and cost.

There are inconsistencies between forces in the implementation of legislation and guidance. In the past two years, some forces have abandoned land checks for sporting rifle applications, but others have not. Some forces regard a change of address as a new application and insist on new medical verification; most do not. Some forces regard security guidance as mandatory; others do not. Certain rifle calibres are regarded by some FLDs as being especially dangerous, despite there being no scientific evidence to support this. There are dozens of conditions, some of them contradictory, that are applied to firearms certificates. In BASC's view, any restriction must be proportionate and evidence-based, but in most cases, no condition is required.

Revocations and refusals

This inconsistency is also evident with regard to revocations and refusals. There is no correct level of refusal and revocation, each case being taken on its merits. Devon and Cornwall has the highest rate of revoking or refusing certificates at more than 23 times the lowest rate, in North Yorkshire. This indicates poor risk assessment by the former and a failure to follow the police's National Decision Making Model (NDMM). We do not have figures to indicate the number of these decisions that have been successfully appealed but we do know that the potential costs of an appeal to the appellant, even a successful one, are beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest individuals.

BASC has identified a marked reluctance among certificate holders to do anything which they consider might annoy the police or otherwise make licensing departments ill-disposed towards them. Very few certificate holders are willing to complain about inappropriate treatment or poor performance. This fear that the police will discriminate against complainants is endemic throughout the shooting community.

All too often when a complaint is made it receives no independent assessment and is routinely referred to the FLD to answer, despite being made against that body in the first instance. The CoP's Authorised Professional Practice (APP) states that certificate holders should be treated with "dignity and respect". It is hard to reconcile that with the perception that so many certificate holders have that they will be discriminated against if they complain.

As a final comment, the quality of revocation letters and refusals varies greatly in terms of detail. Where the letter details the evidence and rationale for refusal or revocation, it is easy for BASC firearms staff to fully understand the decision. This enables a fuller explanation to members and prevention of vexatious appeals.

CASE STUDY

Mr S, a keen deer stalker and BASC member, was attacked on his drive by a neighbour, causing him an injury when he was knocked to the ground. The police were called and statements taken. Both Mr S and the attacker were certificate holders. Despite all the evidence pointing to Mr S being the victim, the superintendent in Kent's FLD revoked both parties. BASC supported Mr S with the BASC Fighting Fund, winning an appeal which resulted in Kent Constabulary having to pay £17,000 in costs.

Training

One of the failures identified by the coroner's inquest into the tragic events in Plymouth was the lack of training for FEOs and decision makers. In July of 2024, the College of Policing (CoP) launched a new mandatory course for all FEOs. This course is now being delivered by the CoP and we understand has received positive feedback. In addition, there is an additional one-day awareness course, delivered under the auspices of the British Shooting Sports Council (BSSC). The day covers the different shooting disciplines as well as giving FEOs the opportunity to fire a variety of firearms. This has also received positive feedback from attendees.

The CoP has also developed a specialist course for FLD decision makers. Both these courses are long overdue and are to be welcomed. The only concern is that there is no longer Home Office finance for the courses, but given the recent 133 per cent average increase in firearms licensing fees forces must fund their FEOs to attend this training.

Communications

One of the issues frequently raised with the BASC firearms team is a problem of communicating with some FLDs. There is a strong correlation between difficulties in getting in touch with an FLD and delays in issuing certificates. A BASC review carried out in April 2025 identified forces that offered no telephone contact, or very limited contact. Similarly, failure by FLDs to respond to email enquiries, particularly relating to renewals, is a recurring problem. This is evidenced in the first case study referred to above.

The revised CoP Approved Professional Practice was released in 2023. The document contains much commendable advice for forces, although it has been noted that to date, no force has released its annual Strategic Demand Assessment on either the force's or the PCC's website. This is a missed opportunity.

Satisfaction survey

In early 2025, BASC launched its first firearms licensing satisfaction survey. A total of 5,145 responses were received, of which 4,445 (86 per cent) were from BASC members. There was no evidence that only those dissatisfied with their FLD's performance responded. As well as asking questions about the turnaround times experienced, respondents were asked to rate forces on information accuracy, ease of communication and timeliness. The possible responses were; very good, good, satisfactory, less than satisfactory and poor.

Responses relating to turnaround times showed that only 45 per cent of grants were completed in less than six months, with 28 per cent taking more than a year. Renewals told a better story, with 86 per cent processed in three-six months and 68 per cent in less than 8-12 weeks. The remaining 14 per cent are likely to be down to a few forces with major issues relating to renewals. Similarly, 88 per cent of variations are completed in less than six months, with 75 per cent in 8-12 weeks. It is worrying that the remainder took longer, with four per cent of variations taking over a year.



The results of the survey paint a less positive picture on turnaround times than the recently released NPCC figures, which are recorded in such a way as to present a more positive picture of police performance. This is supported by the comprehensive figures provided under FOI, which clearly show large numbers of grant applications outstanding from 2024 and 12 forces that have in excess of 50 applications outstanding from 2023.

Between 75 and 80 per cent of responders rated forces as satisfactory or above on all three metrics. This is a clear indication that the majority of forces are providing a good service. Unsurprisingly, there was a very strong correlation between long turnaround times and forces being rated as less than satisfactory or poor. All the forces' ratings and waiting times have been combined to give an overall ranking from 1 (very good) to 38 (poor).

Statistical analysis

A statistical analysis was conducted by the evidence department of BASC. This looked at data supplied by NPCC and the Home Office, the FOI requests and information from the satisfaction survey.

A canonical correspondence analysis (CCA) indicates that better financial and staff resources have a small, but not statistically significant, impact on improved performance. There is also a suggestion that busier departments may achieve some efficiency gains. Overall, the data is clear that the biggest factor in a force's performance is the internal process for issuing certificates.

Conclusions

The firearms licensing system in England and Wales remains inconsistent in terms of delivery, administration and cost. The shooting community is now expected to pay more for the licensing function with no prospect, in large areas of the country, that a good service will be provided. This would not be tolerated in any other licensing system.

It is important to highlight what is good or improving in the system. A satisfaction level of 75-80 per cent in the BASC survey strongly suggests most forces are getting it right. The introduction of mandated training is to be welcomed, as is the open sharing of data by NPCC. BASC enjoys a productive relationship with the majority of forces, with the organisation being viewed as an objective critical friend, rather than one that simply levels criticism.

Forces identified as being in the bottom quartile are seriously failing their customers. Some have identified this, accepted things must change, and have plans in place to improve their performance. BASC accepts this will take time. We are happy to assist in any way. There remain some forces that either do not recognise there is an issue or appear incapable of resolving the problem. These include: The Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire consortium, Devon and Cornwall, Durham and Humberside.

It is for chief constables and PCCs to make sure firearms licensing is a timely, proportionate and cost-effective service that protects public safety. There are plenty of FLDs which are providing an excellent service, while others are cost effective and some achieve both. FELWG should establish the performance level to which all forces aspire and help them reach or exceed that level.

It is for HMICFRS to ensure consistency across forces. If it cannot, it must suggest an alternative system that can achieve this.



Key to individual force data

Budget	Annual departmental budget from FOI request.	**FTE staff**	Number of full-time equivalent staff from FOI request.
Projected income	Income based on one-year certificate renewals, grants and variations etc.	**Annual certificates**	Number of firearm and shotgun certificates divided by five (five-year cycle for certificate renewals).
Certificates per staff	Annual certificates divided by FTE staff.	**Cost per certificate**	Annual budget divided by annual certificates.
Percentage comp 4-month	Percentage of applications completed in four months. Data from NFLMS Q4 2024-25.	**Temp permits**	Number of temporary permits outstanding. Data from NFLMS Q4 2024-25.
Average TRT days	Average turnaround time in days. Data from NFLMS 2024.	**Revs & refs**	Total number of revocations and refusals divided by total number of certificates in force.
Satisfaction position	Overall position based on the BASC satisfaction survey, based on responses from 38 FLDs.	**Overall ranking**	Statistical ranking based on BASC satisfaction survey and timeliness data.

Comments

Comments on performance are based on BASC information. The data is coded red, amber and green for ease of comparison between forces.

NFLMS data

The National Firearms Licensing Management System (NFLMS) data was obtained for all forces under FOI. It is the data for the calendar year 2024. Most is self-explanatory. There is some confusion between the percentage of applications completed that were received in the last 12 months, and percentage of applications completed that were received in the last four months. A force that has a better percentage of applications completed in the last four months is improving its turnaround times and vice-versa. It should be noted, however, that a force that is failing to complete grants can make the four-month percentage (the FELWG performance measurement) artificially flattering to the force. Therefore, both figures need to be taken in that context.

Avon and Somerset Police

Budget	£372,800*	**FTE staff**	23.4
Projected income	£808,041	**Annual certificates**	5,321
Certificates per staff	227	**Cost per certificate**	£70*
Percentage comp 4-month	88%	**Temp permits**	3
Average TRT days	64	**Revs & refs**	0.18%
Satisfaction position	17th	**Overall ranking**	16th

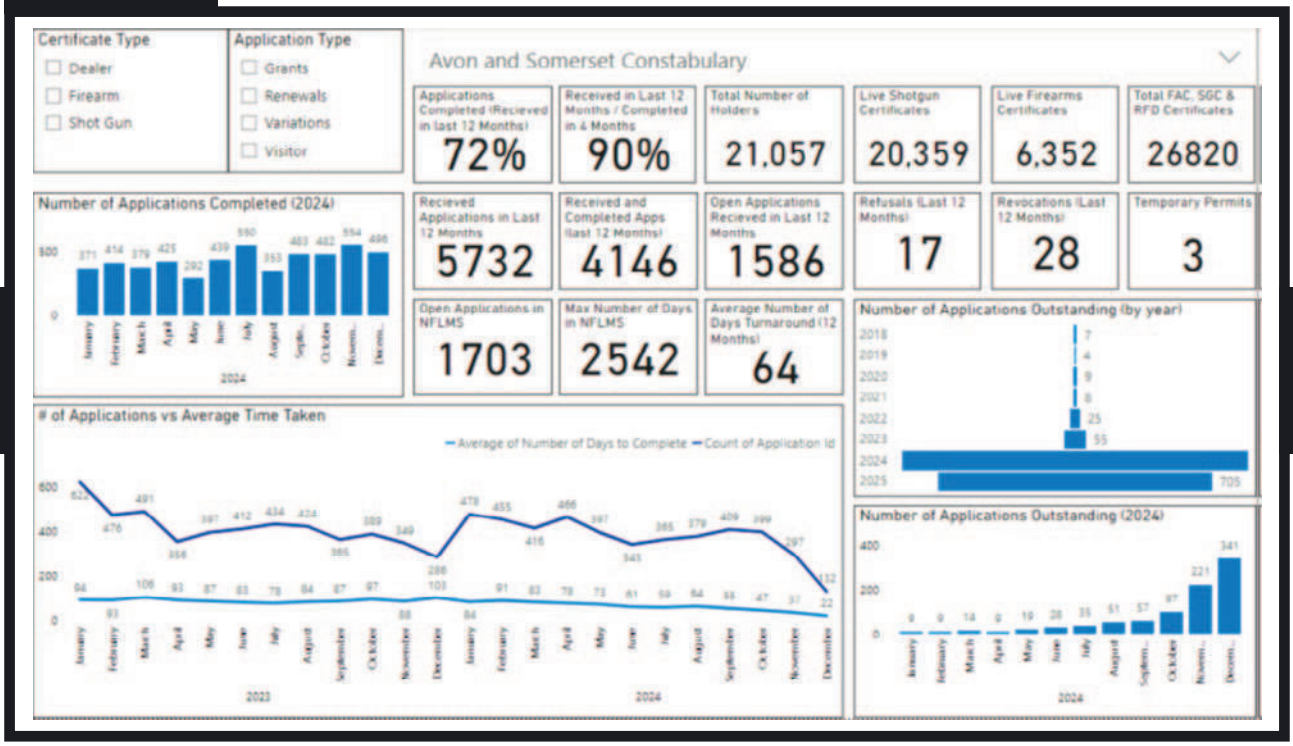
Avon and Somerset's FLD enjoys a very good relationship with BASC, with the association being seen as a critical friend. There are few complaints from BASC members, with licensing decisions being measured and proportionate. The PCC is supportive and although the new funding has not been ring-fenced, it has been indicated that the additional funds will be used to support the department.

The number of certificates per member of staff is high, so the FLD would probably benefit from additional resourcing. The budget disclosed is clearly not the full departmental budget, possibly because the FLD sits within another business area. This is also true of other FLDs. We therefore cannot comment on cost-effectiveness.

There is no Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and this would be a useful addition, as recommended in the CoP's APP.

*The budget declared is not the full departmental budget.

NFLMS data



Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Police

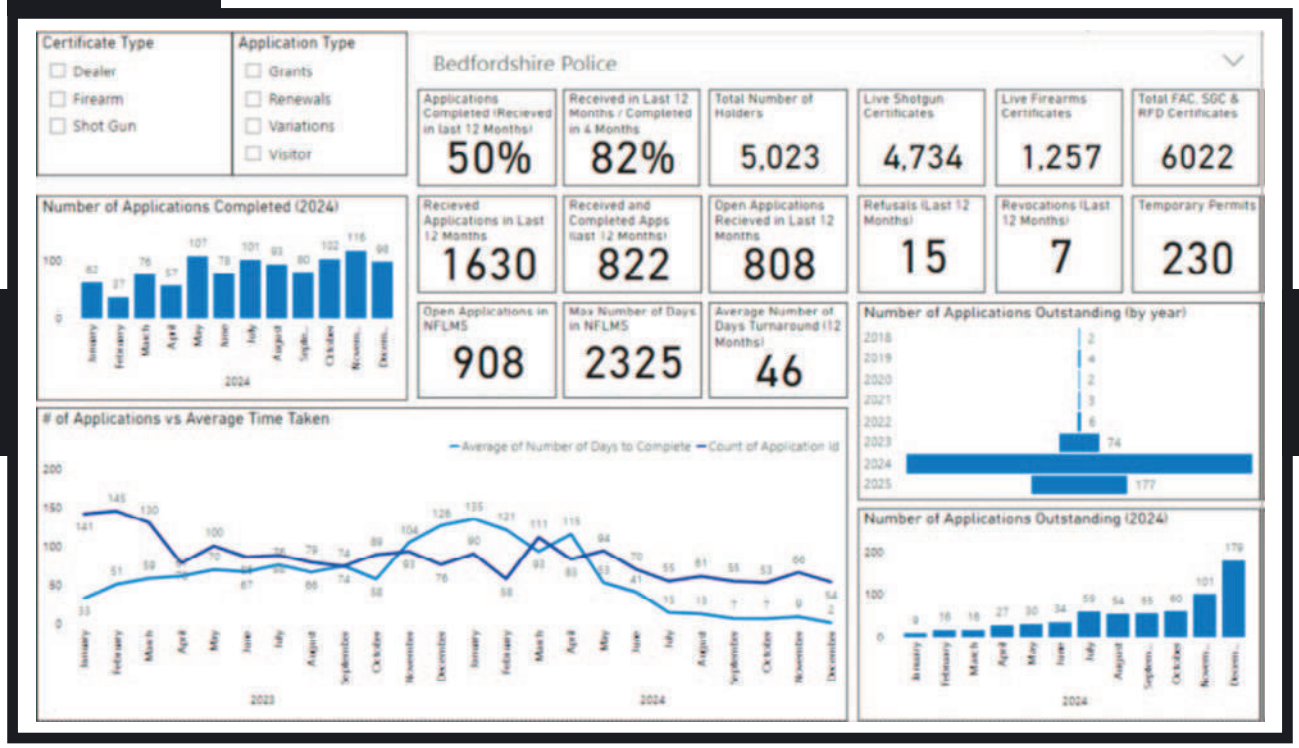
Budget	£954,600	**FTE staff**	17
Projected income	£895,599	**Annual certificates**	5,904
Certificates per staff	347	**Cost per certificate**	£162
Percentage comp 4-month	Circa 40%	**Temp permits**	1,187
Average TRT days	47	**Revs & refs**	0.38%
Satisfaction position	38th	**Overall ranking**	38th

The BCH collaboration is the worst performing FLD in England and Wales. There are more than 1,000 certificate holders on temporary permits, with a similar number who have had to place their firearms into storage, due to failure to renew in a timely manner. BASC receives more complaints about BCH than any other FLD, and this is reflected in it receiving the lowest satisfaction level in the BASC licensing survey.

Although BASC accepts there was some poor decision making in the past, this does not explain how the FLD with the best turnaround times in 2022 now has the worst. The IAG in February 2025 outlined plans to tackle the situation, but there is little evidence of improvement. BASC understands a new management team has been instated. Such a change is well overdue.

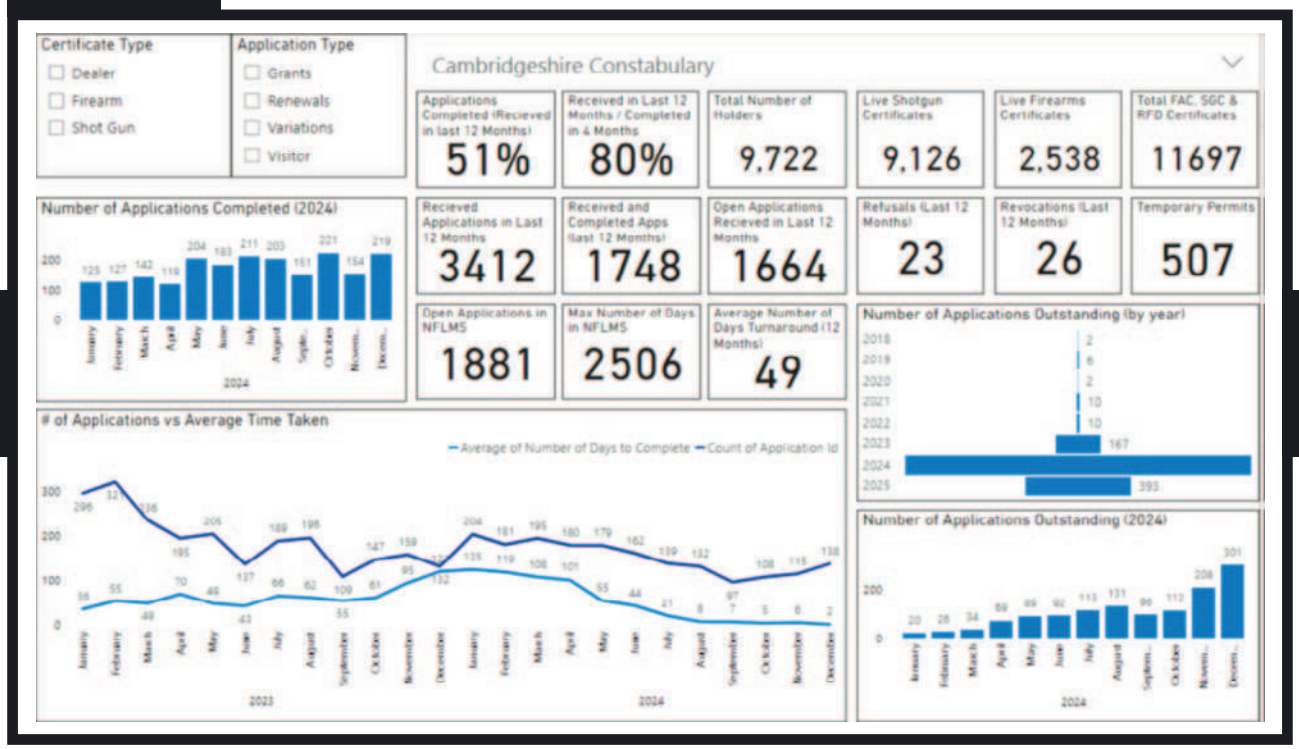
The number of certificates per member of staff is one of the highest in England and Wales, so the three PCCs and chief constables need to devote additional resources to the department. The PCCs need to ask themselves whether the collaboration best serves their voters.

NFLMS data

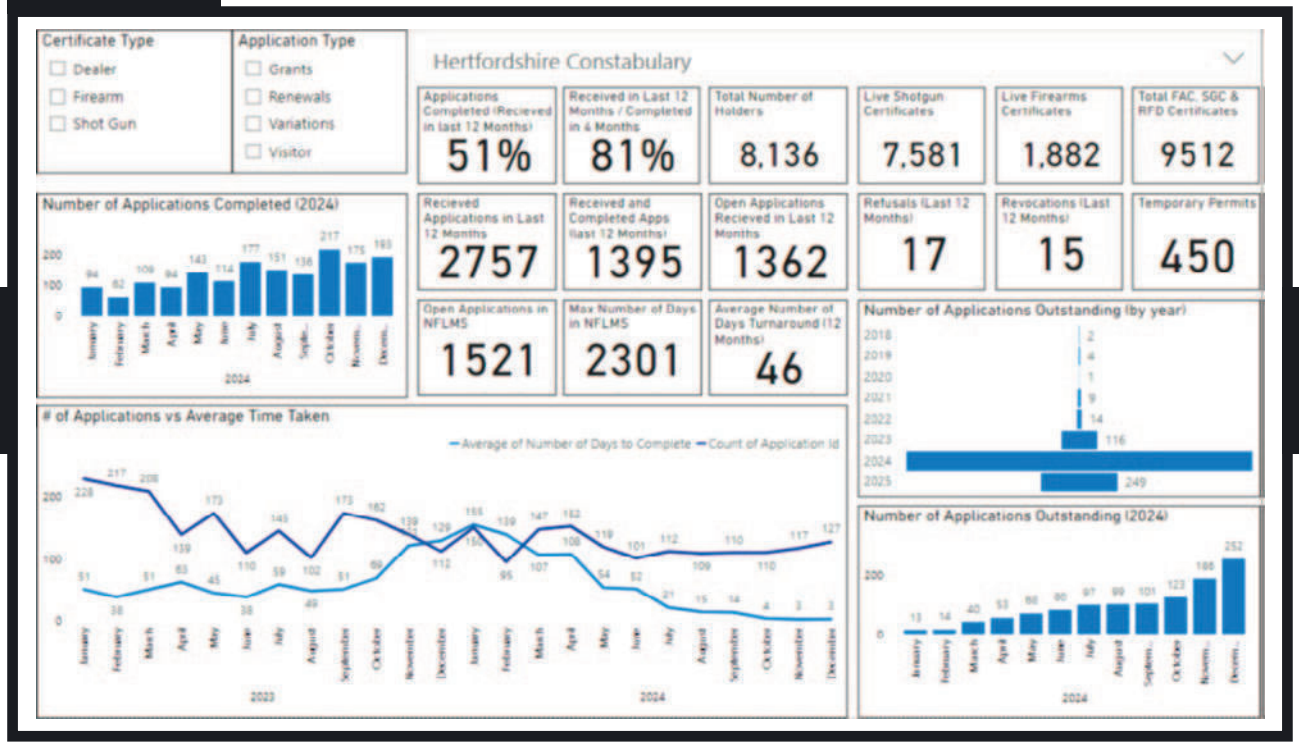


Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Hertfordshire Police continued

NFLMS data



NFLMS data



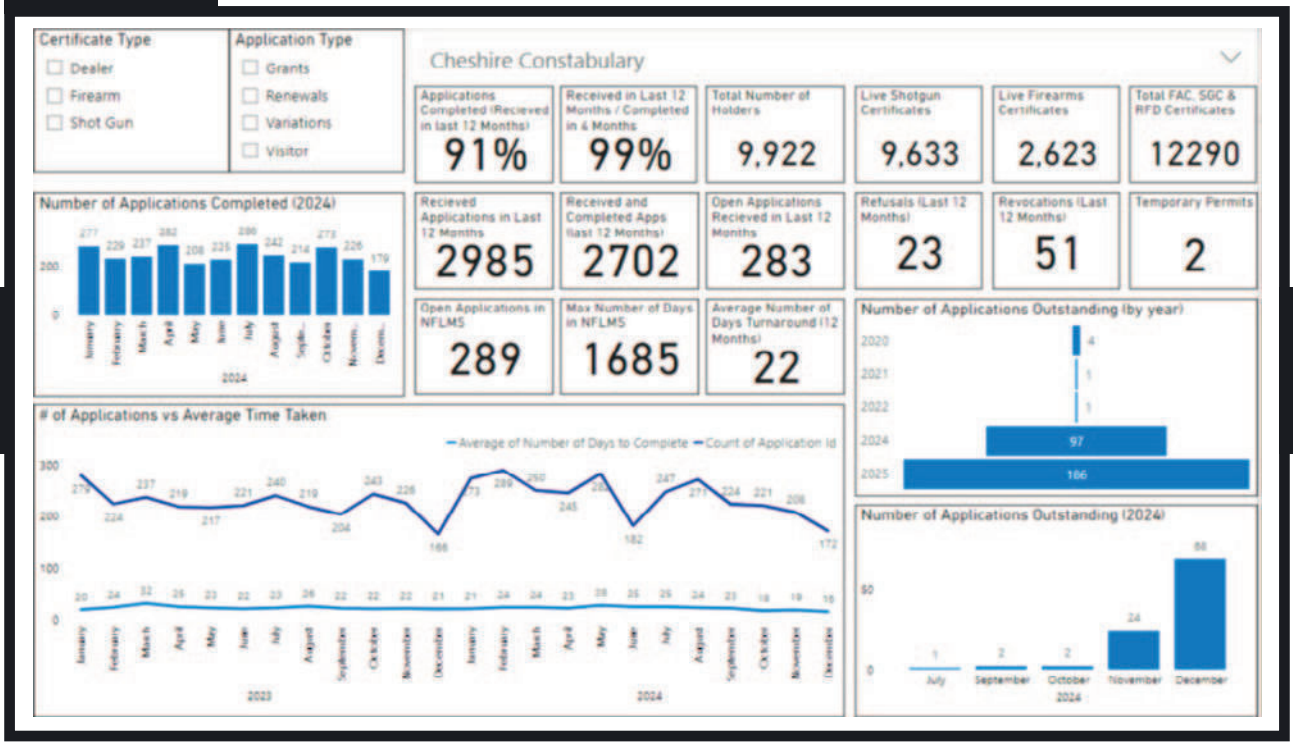
Cheshire Police

Budget	£454,871	**FTE staff**	12.4
Projected income	£378,666	**Annual certificates**	2,496
Certificates per staff	201	**Cost per certificate**	£182
Percentage comp 4-month	99%	**Temp permits**	2
Average TRT days	22	**Revs & refs**	0.6%
Satisfaction position	3rd	**Overall ranking**	3rd

There is much to commend about Cheshire's FLD, as reflected in the performance figures and satisfaction survey. It delivers an excellent service at a cost which is close to the England and Wales median. Complaints to BASC are extremely rare. Communication is good, although this would be improved if an IAG was set up in accordance with the CoP's APP. That said, they do visit shooting grounds and certificate holders are invited. This probably achieves the same goals.

The PCC is supportive and has confirmed that funds from licensing will be ring-fenced.

NFLMS data



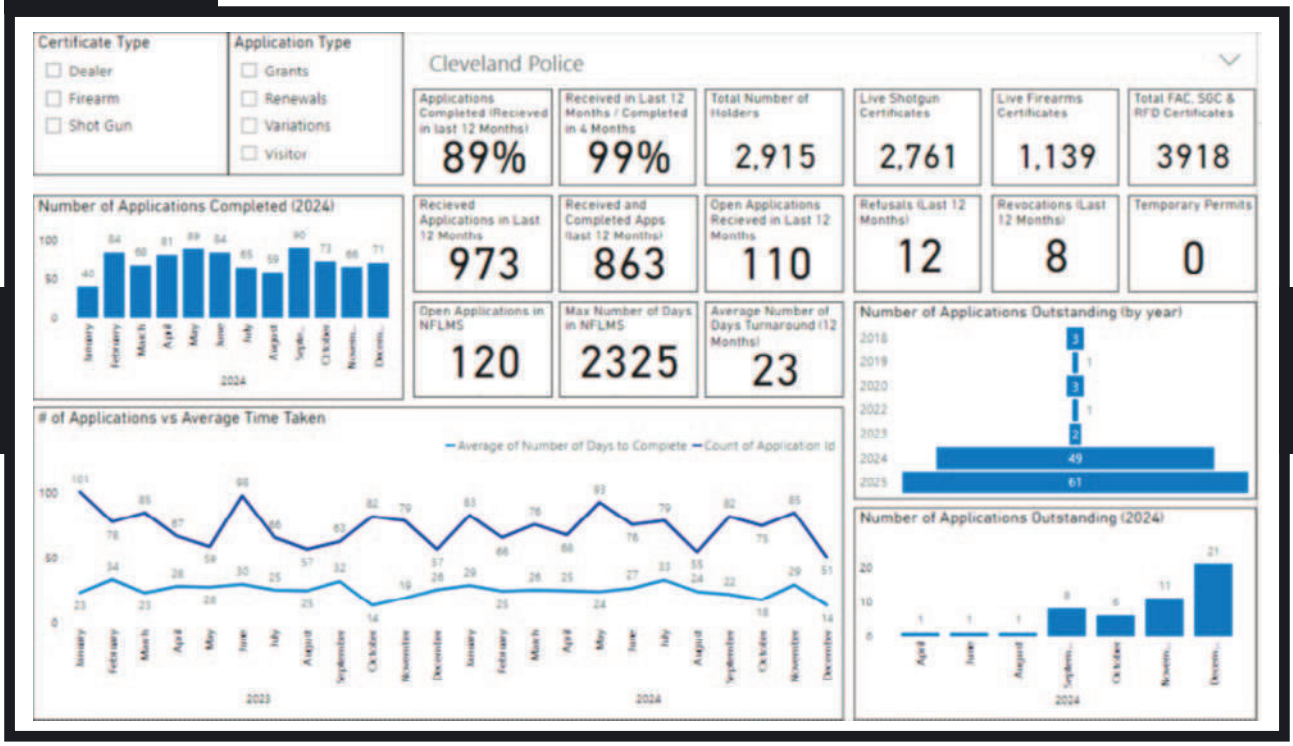
Cleveland Police

Budget	£124,000	**FTE staff**	3
Projected income	£119,732	**Annual certificates**	787
Certificates per staff	262	**Cost per certificate**	£158
Percentage comp 4-month	99%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	23	**Revs & refs**	0.51%
Satisfaction position	1st	**Overall ranking**	1st

Cleveland's FLD is one of the smallest. Nevertheless, it must be commended for achieving the highest satisfaction level and performance rating in England and Wales. It also manages to achieve this at a cost which is well below average. Complaints to BASC are very rare. This is excellent service.

The FLD does not have an IAG, but it could be argued that given the satisfaction levels, it does not need one. Nevertheless, BASC understands it is considering setting one up in conjunction with its neighbouring forces . The only other concern is about future resilience, given the high numbers of certificates per member of staff. Further investment would be prudent.

NFLMS data



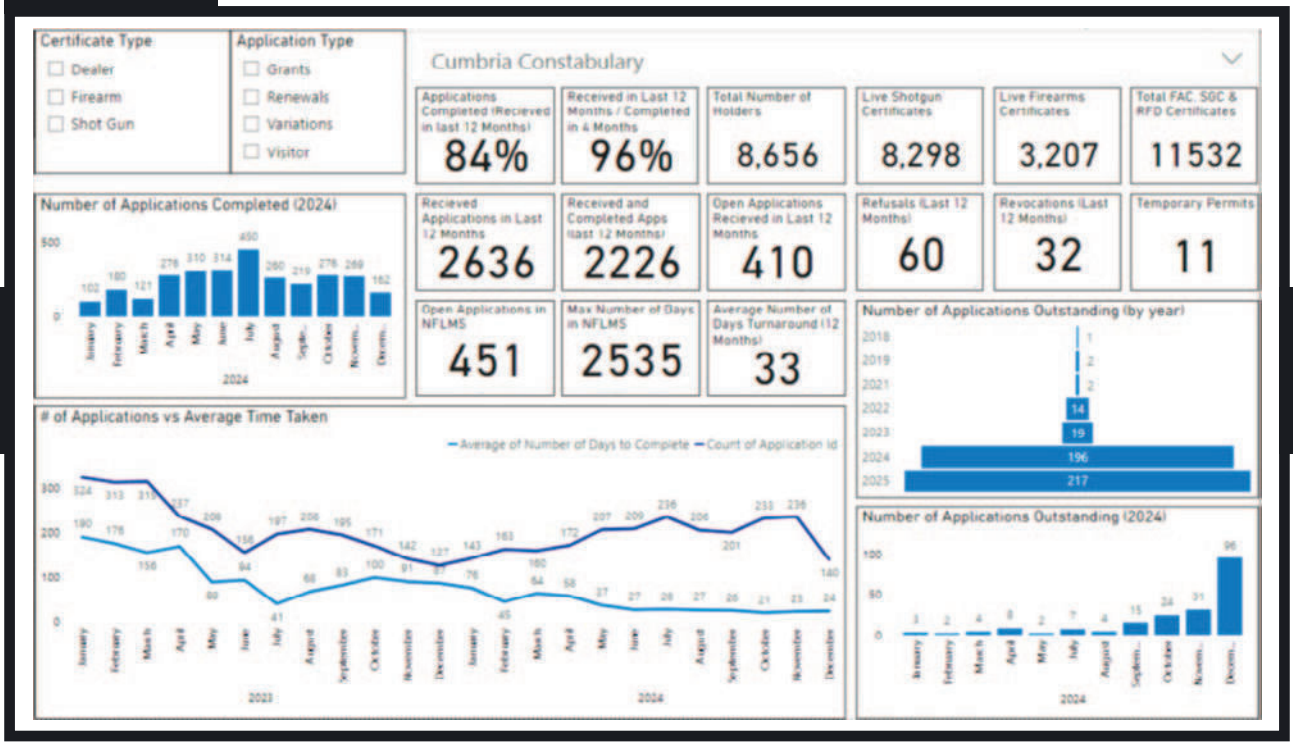
Cumbria Police

Budget	£603,880	**FTE staff**	10.46
Projected income	£328,640	**Annual certificates**	2,160
Certificates per staff	207	**Cost per certificate**	£280
Percentage comp 4-month	93%	**Temp permits**	11
Average TRT days	33	**Revs & refs**	0.8%
Satisfaction position	27th	**Overall ranking**	28th

Over the past 18 months, Cumbria's FLD performance has been transformed. At the beginning of 2024 it had some of the highest backlogs in England and Wales. Action by the chief constable and PCC has galvanised the department, with most backlogs eliminated. Unfortunately, BASC still receives complaints, although many of these relate to historic applications. The relatively low score on the satisfaction survey probably reflects the previous performance.

The force works well with BASC, seeing the organisation as a critical friend. We would encourage further communication with stakeholders in the form of an IAG, as recommended by the CoP's APP. The PCC continues to be very supportive, confirming that funds from the increased fees are ring-fenced.

NFLMS data



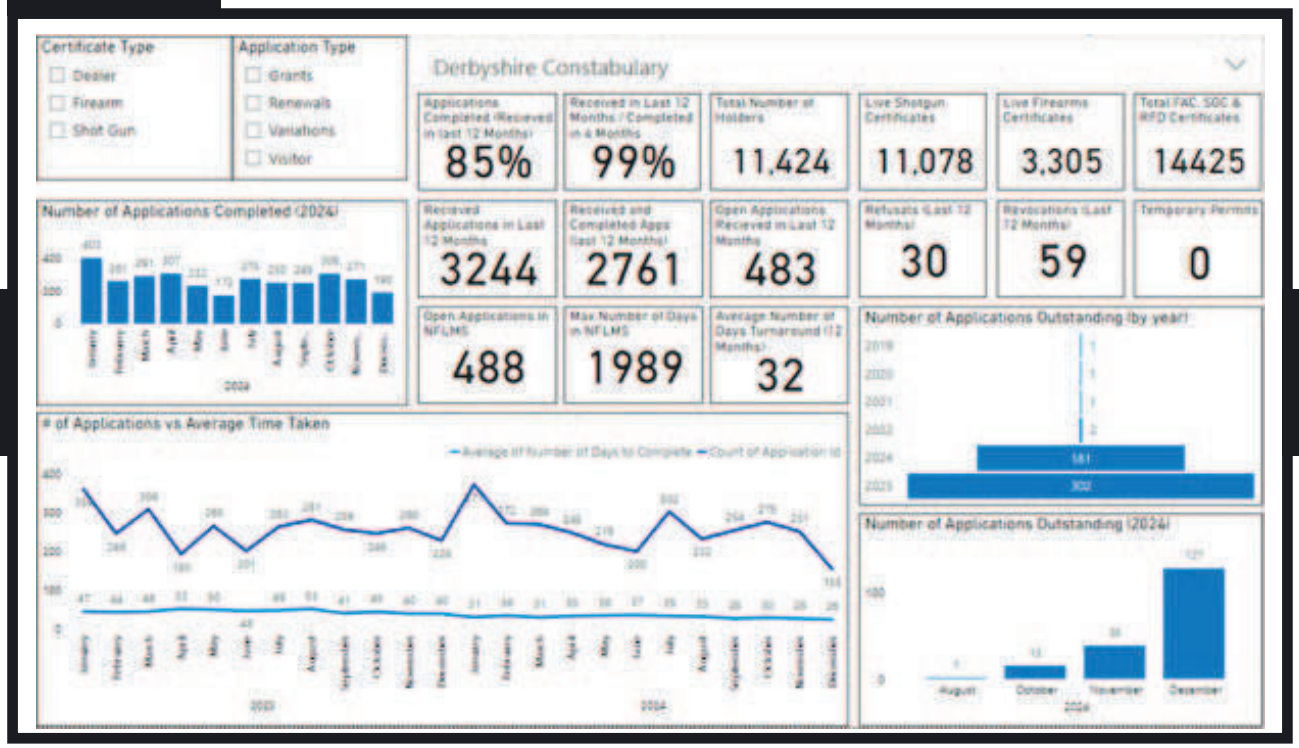
Derbyshire Police

Budget	£620,500	**FTE staff**	15.6
Projected income	£441,936	**Annual certificates**	2,911
Certificates per staff	187	**Cost per certificate**	£213
Percentage comp 4-month	99%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	32	**Revs & refs**	0.64%
Satisfaction position	2nd	**Overall ranking**	2nd

Derbyshire's FLD shows excellent levels of performance and a very high level of stakeholder satisfaction. Complaints from BASC members are very low. BASC enjoys a good relationship with the department, providing awareness training to many of the staff over the last two years. Communication with stakeholders is good, with the establishment of an IAG in 2024. Feedback from the IAG is good.

The PCC is supportive, having ring-fenced the increased fees to be used within the department. BASC's only concern relates to members moving to the area being asked to provide an additional medical verification at their expense. Not only is this costly, but can be difficult to achieve when one has moved to an area and has a new GP practice.

NFLMS data



Devon and Cornwall Police

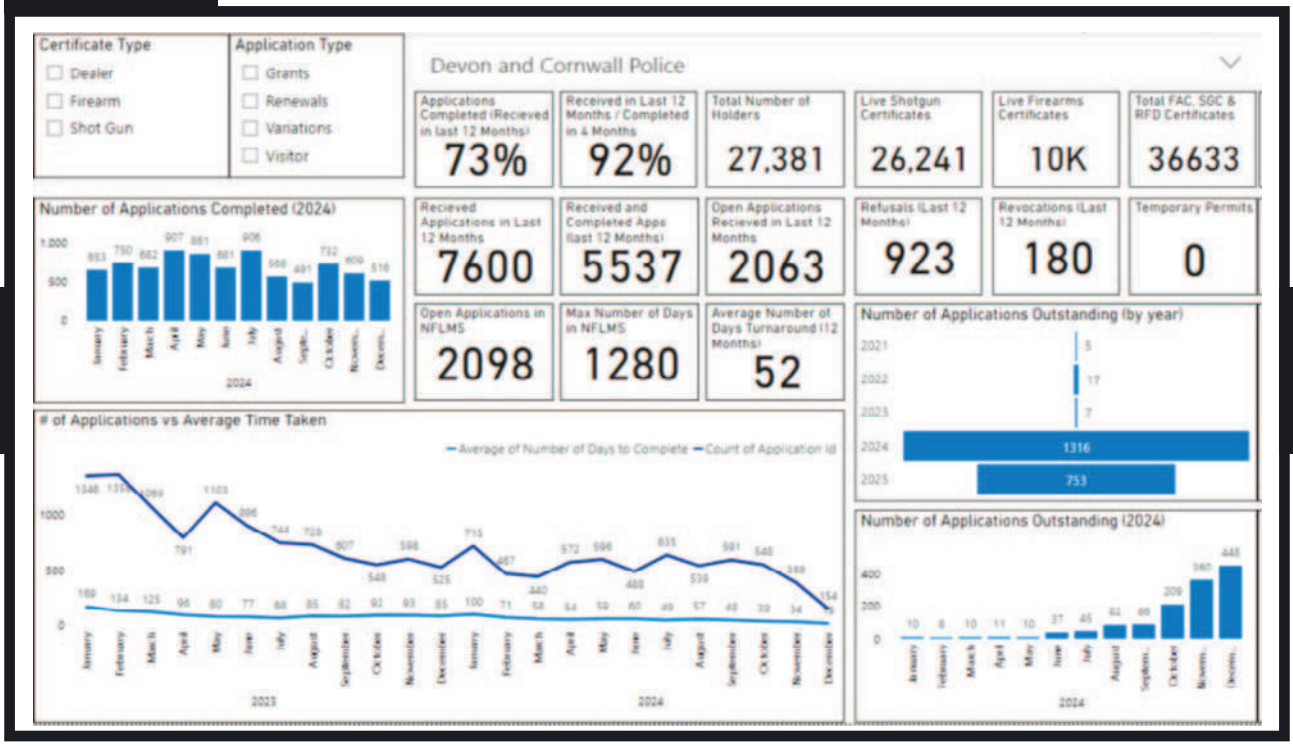
Budget	£1,832,590	**FTE staff**	58.26
Projected income	£1,096,385	**Annual certificates**	7,208
Certificates per staff	124	**Cost per certificate**	£254
Percentage comp 4-month	89%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	52	**Revs & refs**	3%
Satisfaction position	34th	**Overall ranking**	34th

Devon and Cornwall's FLD has struggled with its performance since the tragic shootings in Plymouth in 2021. Although things are much improved with respect to renewals and eliminating the need to issue Section 7 permits, grants remain a problem. BASC continues to receive more complaints about this FLD than any other, and this is reflected by the satisfaction survey.

The level of revocations and refusals of three per cent of certificates, is seven times the average for England and Wales and 23 times the lowest rate. Given previous events, it is perhaps unsurprising that the FLD is cautious, but this level reflects poor risk management or failure to use the NDMM correctly. It also raises questions over the effectiveness of the post-Keyham review of licence holders that revocations remain so high, as this would have been expected to identify historical problems.

New members of the senior leadership team have recently been appointed, and it is hoped this will lead to more proportionate decision making.

NFLMS data



Dorset Police

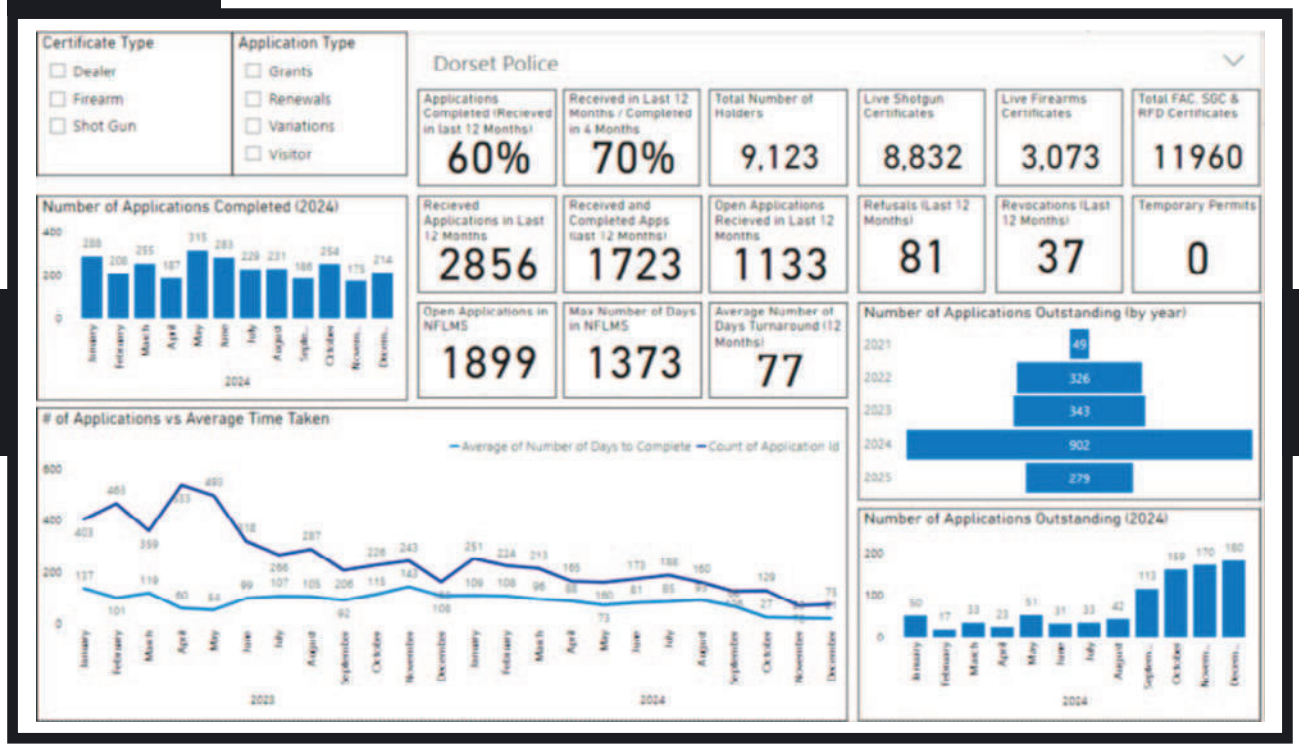
Budget	£675,750	**FTE staff**	12.94
Projected income	£345,326	**Annual certificates**	2,272
Certificates per staff	176	**Cost per certificate**	£297
Percentage comp 4-month	59%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	77	**Revs & refs**	1%
Satisfaction position	36th	**Overall ranking**	36th=

Dorset's FLD is still struggling from the legacy issues of splitting with Devon & Cornwall's FLD. This effectively meant starting a new department from scratch, when there were already considerable delays. It is a testament to the department, with strong backing from senior management and an extremely supportive PCC, that things are gradually improving.

The situation with renewals is now under control, but unfortunately there remains much work to be done on grants, some of which are outstanding from 2022. There is a plan to recruit additional staff to tackle the backlogs, and this must be successful if satisfaction among stakeholders is to improve. It cannot be right that applicants for grants are still waiting after three years.

The FLD generally communicates well with BASC, and the association will provide any assistance required to get the department back on an even keel. Setting up an IAG as recommended by the CoP's APP would further improve relations with stakeholders.

NFLMS data



Durham Police

Budget	£531,520	**FTE staff**	16.53
Projected income	£233,552	**Annual certificates**	1,533
Certificates per staff	93	**Cost per certificate**	£347
Percentage comp 4-month	55%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	78	**Revs & refs**	0.64%
Satisfaction position	31st	**Overall ranking**	33rd

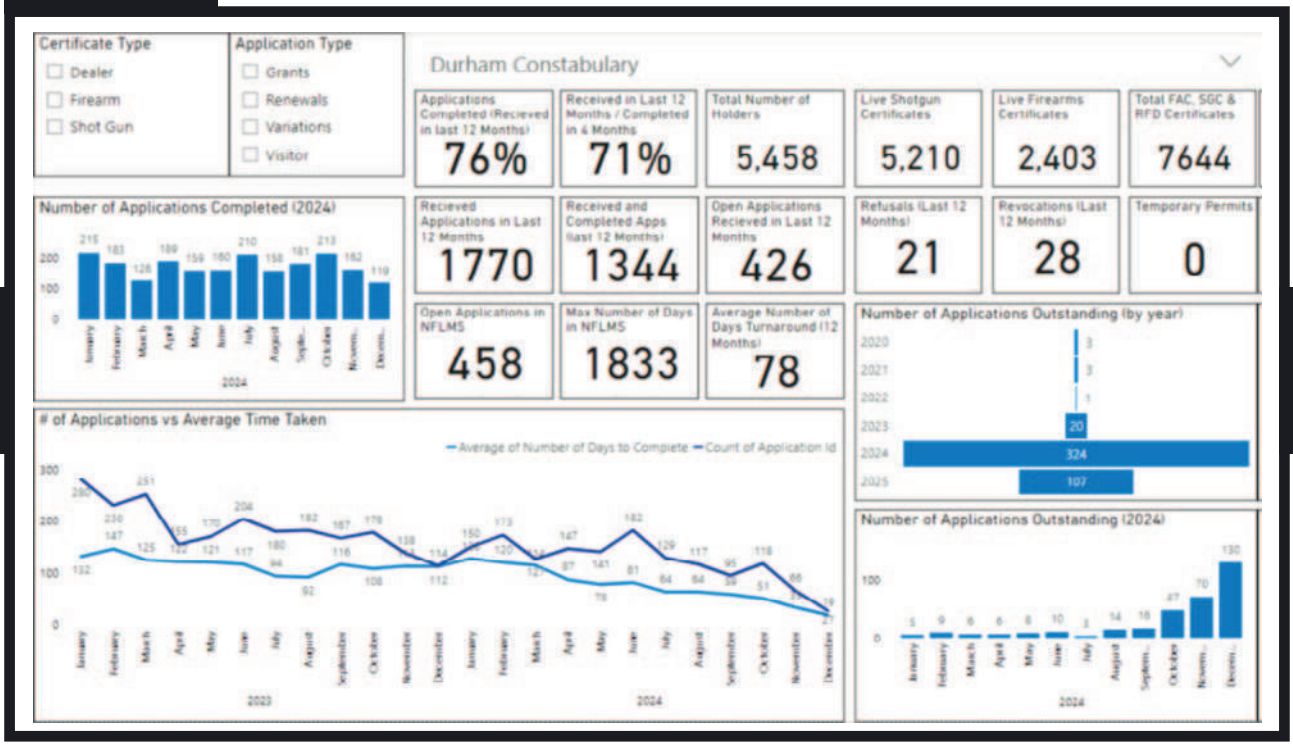
Durham FLD's poor performance is difficult to explain. The department is extremely well resourced, with one of the highest ratios of staff to certificates in the country. It is also the most expensive force, costing £347 per certificate. It is probable that previous incidents have led to an entirely risk-averse process, and this is hindering good decision making. This is reflected in the poor results in the BASC satisfaction survey.

The BASC regional firearms officer has a very good relationship with the head of the FLD, and we are very happy to work with the department to resolve the problems. We are also aware of recruitment difficulties which cannot help the situation. These are currently being addressed.

The department does not have an IAG at present, but like Cleveland, is looking at developing one with its bordering forces.

It is for the chief officers in the force to identify the problems and take corrective action. It is for the PCC to hold them to account for what is unacceptable performance.

NFLMS data



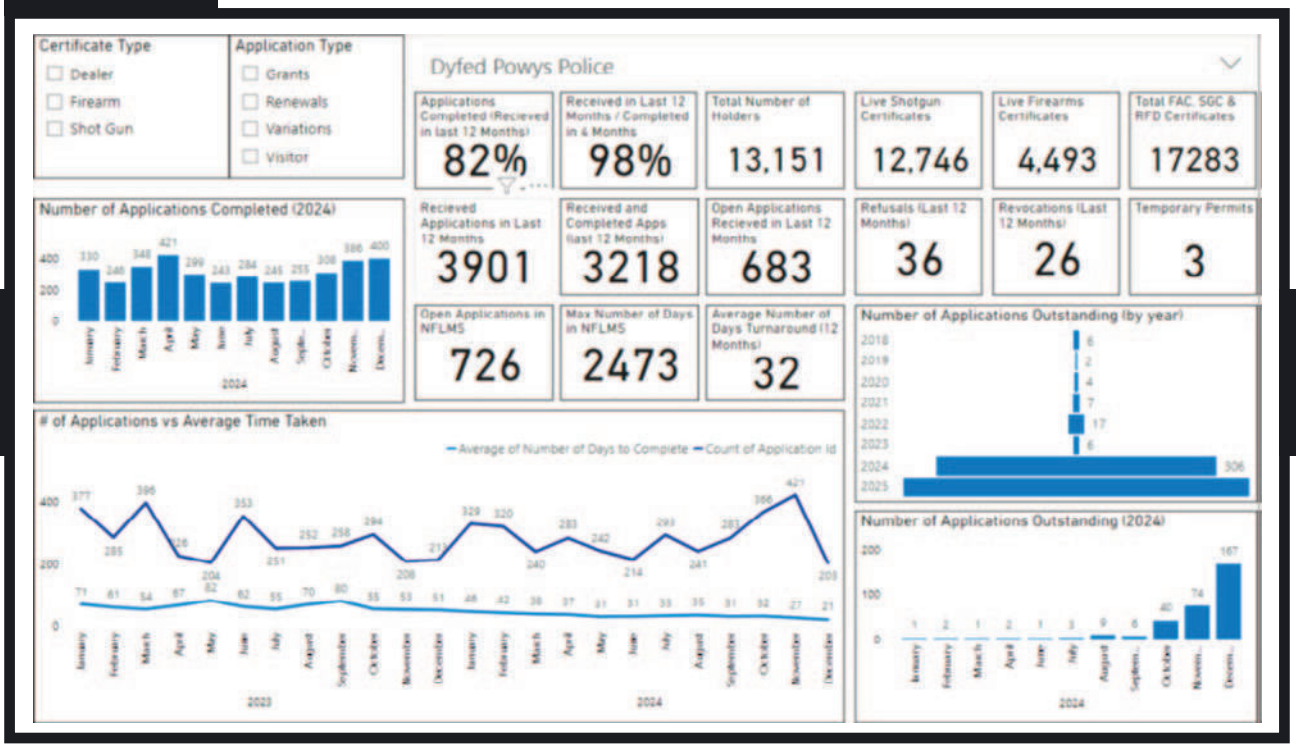
Dyfed-Powys Police

Budget	£590,018	**FTE staff**	23.46
Projected income	£525,268	**Annual certificates**	3,456
Certificates per staff	147	**Cost per certificate**	£171
Percentage comp 4-month	97%	**Temp permits**	3
Average TRT days	32	**Revs & refs**	0.36%
Satisfaction position	12th	**Overall ranking**	12th

The figures above and the 'all-green' assessment demonstrate what can be achieved in an FLD when the PCC and chief constable take a firm grip of a department. In 2022, BASC received more complaints about Dyfed-Powys' FLD than any other force in the UK. Such complaints are now virtually non-existent. The force is achieving excellent results on every measure.

BASC enjoys a good relationship with the force, being seen as a critical friend. The force is also looking at setting up an IAG in accordance with the CoP's APP and this can only improve stakeholder satisfaction further. The PCC continues to be supportive and has committed to ring-fencing the income from increased fees to support the department.

NFLMS data



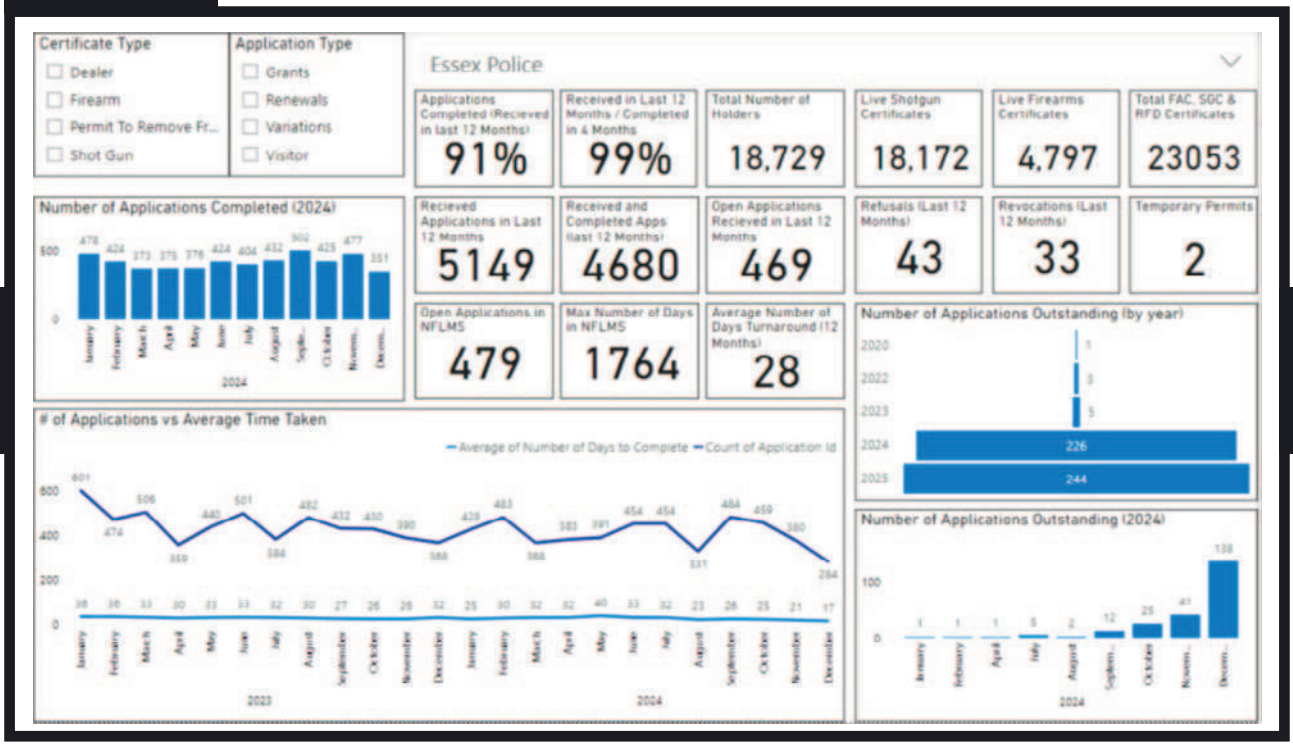
Essex Police

Budget	£850,000	**FTE staff**	30
Projected income	£704,884	**Annual certificates**	4,648
Certificates per staff	155	**Cost per certificate**	£183
Percentage comp 4-month	98%	**Temp permits**	2
Average TRT days	28	**Revs & refs**	0.34%
Satisfaction position	5th	**Overall ranking**	5th

Essex's FLD continues to provide an excellent performance across all areas. This is clearly reflected in the customer satisfaction survey. They also achieve this while keeping costs at the national average.

Communication with BASC is very good, with the FLD regarding us as a critical friend. The deputy head of the department is one of a number of licensing managers who have worked with BASC improving customer service in both organisations as well as BASC's understanding of the issues facing FLDs. The PCC is supportive and has committed to ring-fencing the income from increased fees to support the department.

NFLMS data



Gloucestershire Police

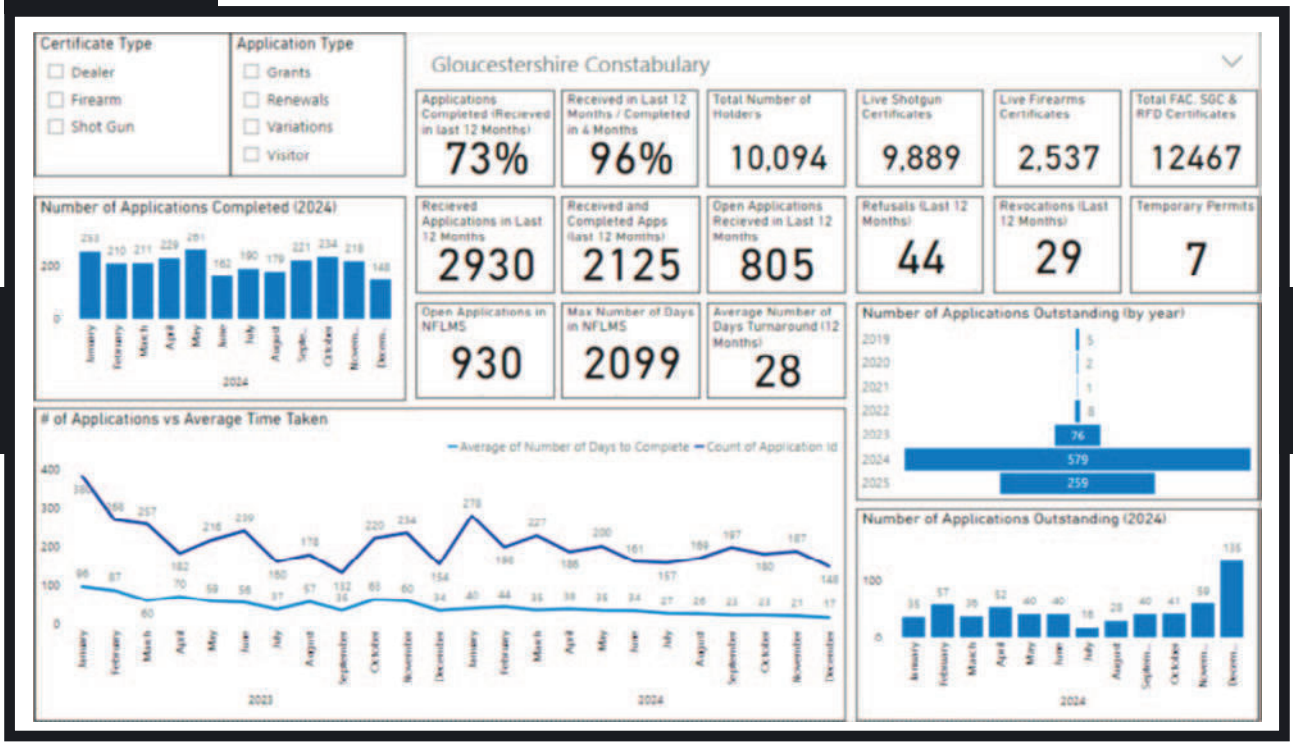
Budget	£463,717	**FTE staff**	9.77
Projected income	£383,297	**Annual certificates**	2,527
Certificates per staff	249	**Cost per certificate**	£184
Percentage comp 4-month	95%	**Temp permits**	7
Average TRT days	28	**Revs & refs**	0.59%
Satisfaction position	32nd	**Overall ranking**	31st

Gloucestershire's FLD has struggled recently with a loss of staff resulting in increasing delays, particularly with respect to grants. This is clearly reflected in the poor satisfaction levels recorded in the BASC survey.

It is important to acknowledge that the FLD and Gloucestershire's chief officers have recognised this and have a clear plan in place to improve the situation. New staff are being recruited and a new manager has been appointed. The Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) responsible is regularly updating BASC and other stakeholders on the ongoing situation.

The PCC has been supportive of these improvements and has also committed to ring-fencing the additional funds from the fees increase for use within the FLD.

NFLMS data



Greater Manchester Police

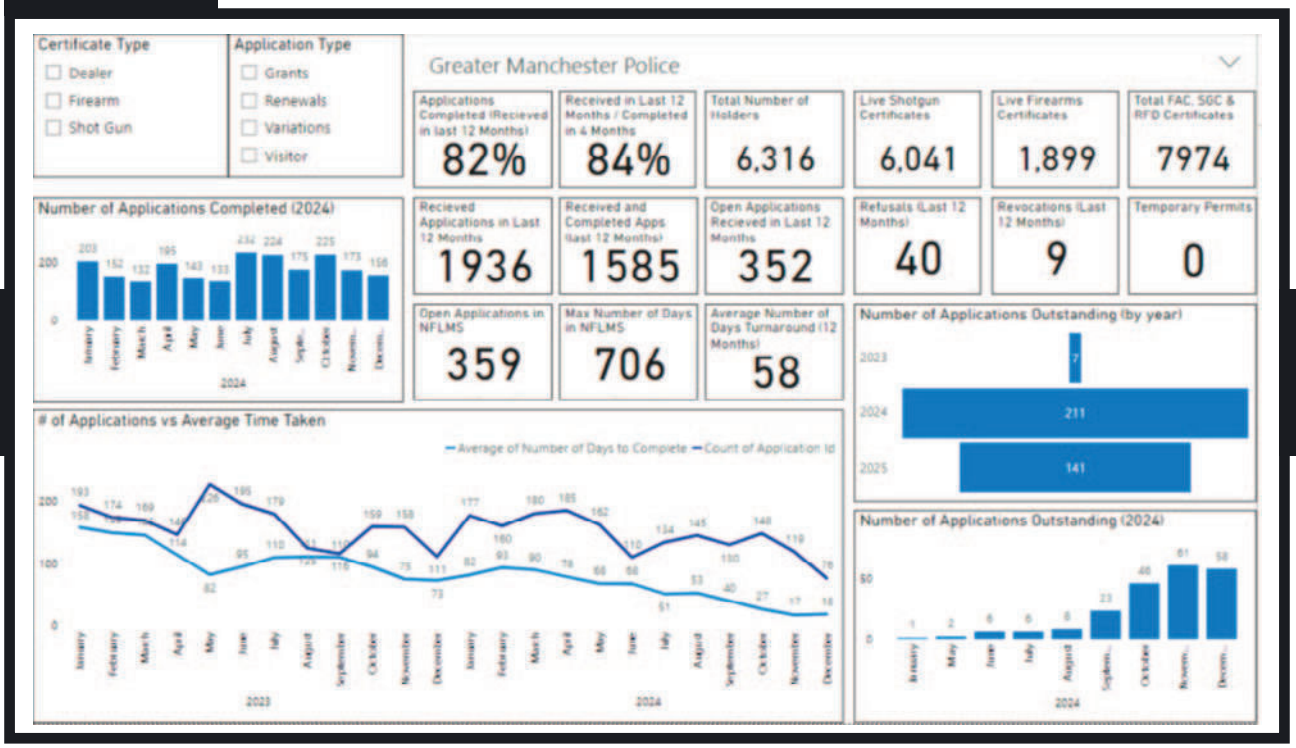
Budget	Unknown	**FTE staff**	Unknown
Projected income	£442,518	**Annual certificates**	2,926
Certificates per staff	N/A	**Cost per certificate**	Unknown
Percentage comp 4-month	87%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	58	**Revs & refs**	0.61%
Satisfaction position	16th	**Overall ranking**	19th

GMP's freedom of information department was the only one to refuse to release the information on budgets and staffing levels. Nevertheless, from the data we have, the force's FLD is performing at a good level. Complaints are low and there appear to be no unacceptable delays.

From a communications perspective the FLD is proactive in attending both local and national events. It also has an excellent relationship with BASC, regarding the association as a critical friend.

The PCC has not responded to BASC's request to ring-fence the increased funding for the FLD, so we can only hope the policing minister's request for this to be done is respected.

NFLMS data



Gwent Police

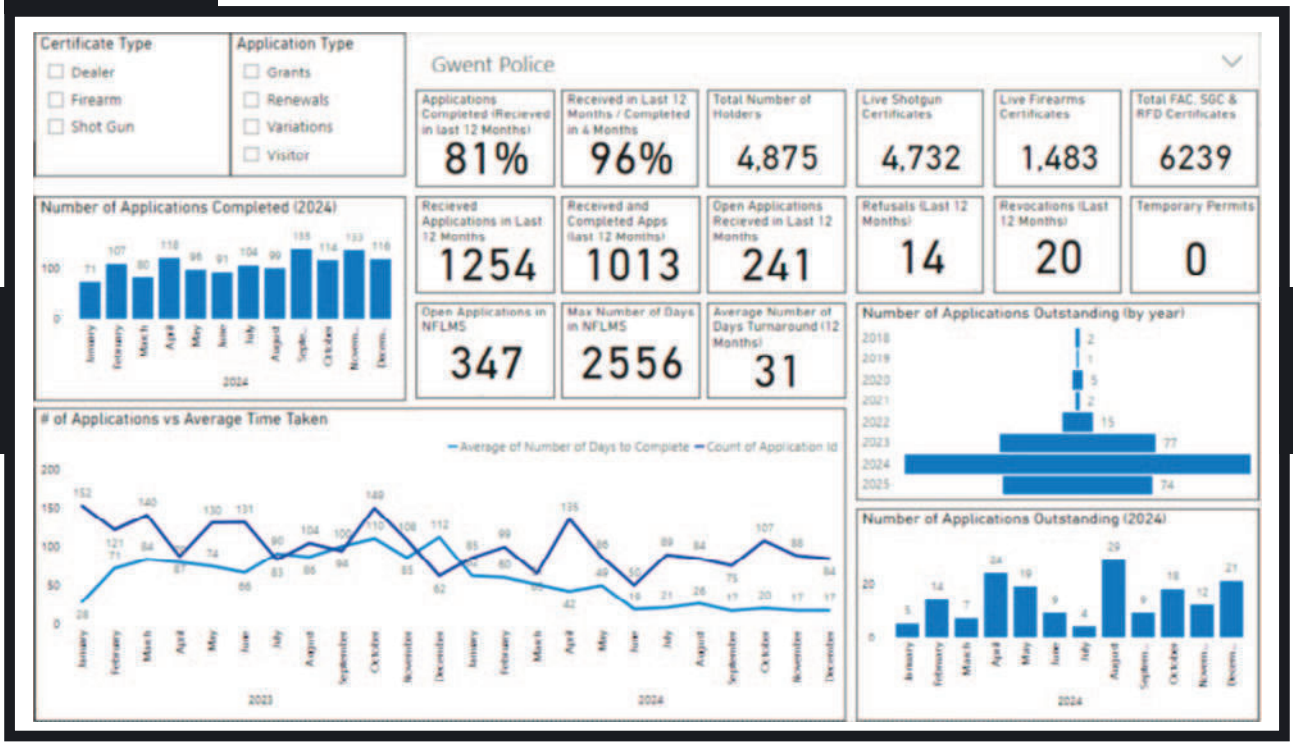
Budget	£334,409	**FTE staff**	15.2
Projected income	£190,853	**Annual certificates**	1,257
Certificates per staff	83	**Cost per certificate**	£266
Percentage comp 4-month	95%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	31	**Revs & refs**	0.54%
Satisfaction position	33rd	**Overall ranking**	32nd

The very poor feedback in the BASC satisfaction survey, reflects a period over the last two years when the force's FLD was seen as being hostile to the shooting community. This was manifested in risk-averse decision making and a lack of proportionality. It also resulted in a very high level of complaints.

However, BASC is pleased that recent staffing changes have greatly improved service. Renewals are now completed prior to expiry and it is hoped that outstanding grants will soon be reduced. Communication has been greatly improved, with BASC being seen as a critical friend. The FLD has also started an IAG which is much appreciated by stakeholders.

The PCC has not responded to BASC's request to ring-fence the increased funding for the FLD, so we can only hope the policing minister's request for this to be done is respected.

NFLMS data



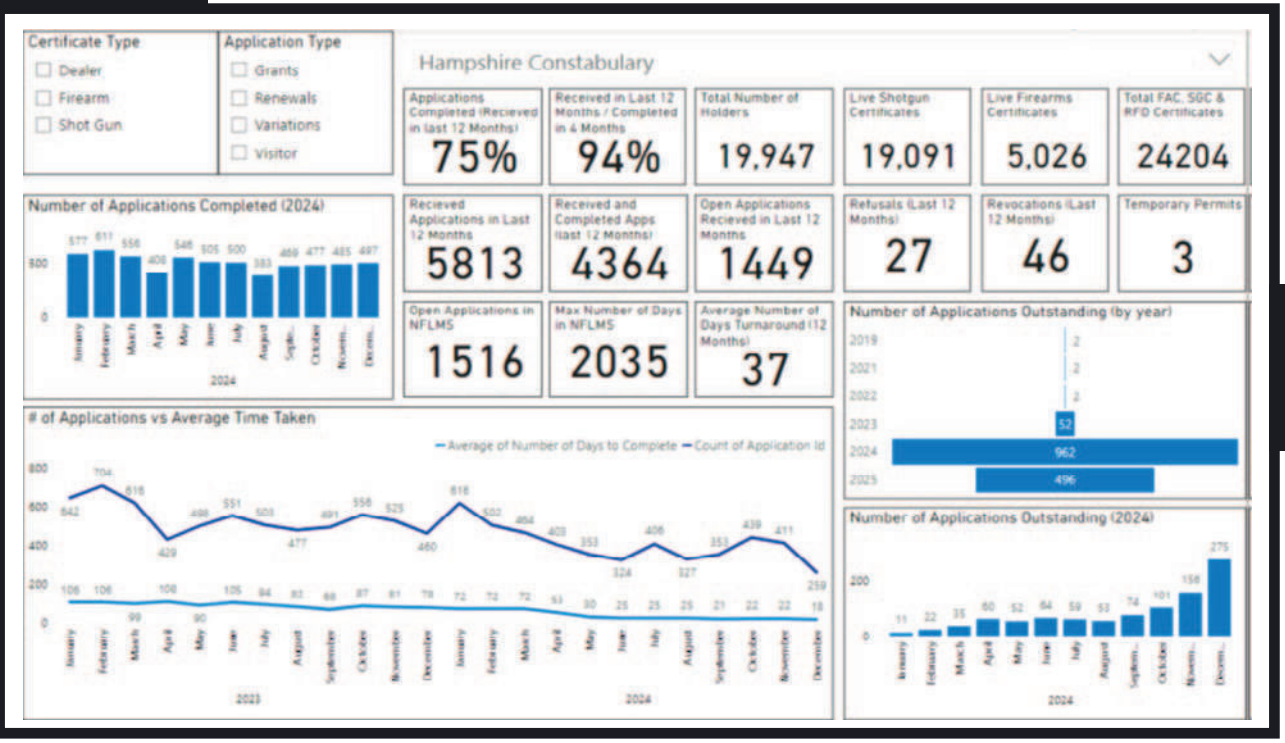
Hampshire Police

Budget	£823,100	**FTE staff**	24.62
Projected income	£732,819	**Annual certificates**	4,831
Certificates per staff	196	**Cost per certificate**	£170
Percentage comp 4-month	92%	**Temp permits**	3
Average TRT days	37	**Revs & refs**	0.3%
Satisfaction position	24th	**Overall ranking**	23rd

Hampshire has had staffing problems for many years. Recruiting and retaining staff in the current climate is very difficult, but the department is looking at ways to resolve this. Recent performance is much improved, particularly when compared with the last five years. BASC still has concerns about the FLD falling back again and there remain serious delays in grant applications.

The department has good communications with BASC and it also benefits from an IAG for stakeholders. The PCC is supportive and has given guarantees that funds from the increased fees will be ring-fenced for the FLD.

NFLMS data



Humberside Police

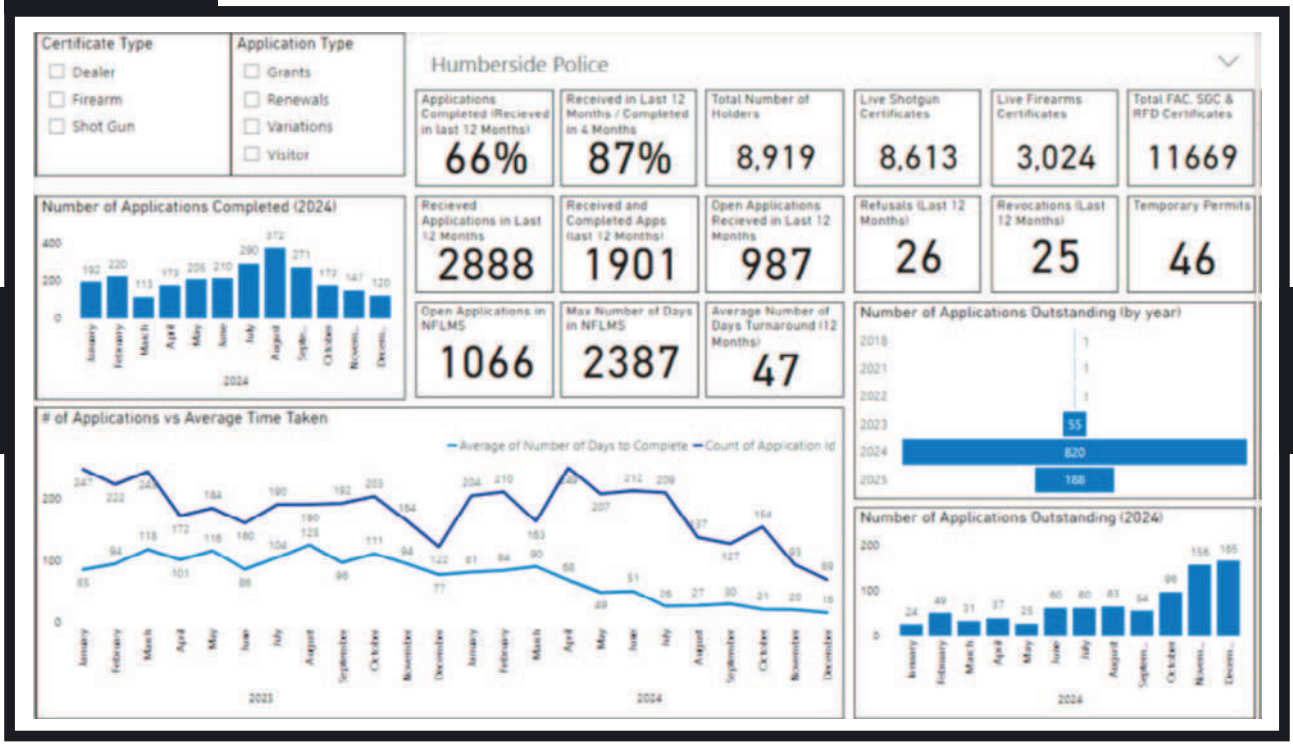
Budget	£380,600*	**FTE staff**	19.62
Projected income	£365,271	**Annual certificates**	2,404
Certificates per staff	123	**Cost per certificate**	£158*
Percentage comp 4-month	76%	**Temp permits**	46
Average TRT days	47	**Revs & refs**	0.44%
Satisfaction position	29th	**Overall ranking**	29th

Humberside has struggled recently with staffing issues, but overall, there is little improvement in performance since the previous BASC report in 2022. Grants are taking around a year to process, with Humberside being one of the forces that at the beginning of 2025 still had outstanding applications from 2023. The number of certificates per staff member is well below the median of 180, suggesting the problems are with internal force procedures.

There has been a recent change in the FLD's management and BASC has a good relationship with the department. The PCC has been supportive in the past but there has been no confirmation from him, or the chief constable, that the increased funds from licensing will be ring-fenced for the department. Such a commitment would be welcome. There is also no IAG at present.

*The budget figure and therefore the cost per certificate are not realistic given the number of staff employed.

NFLMS data



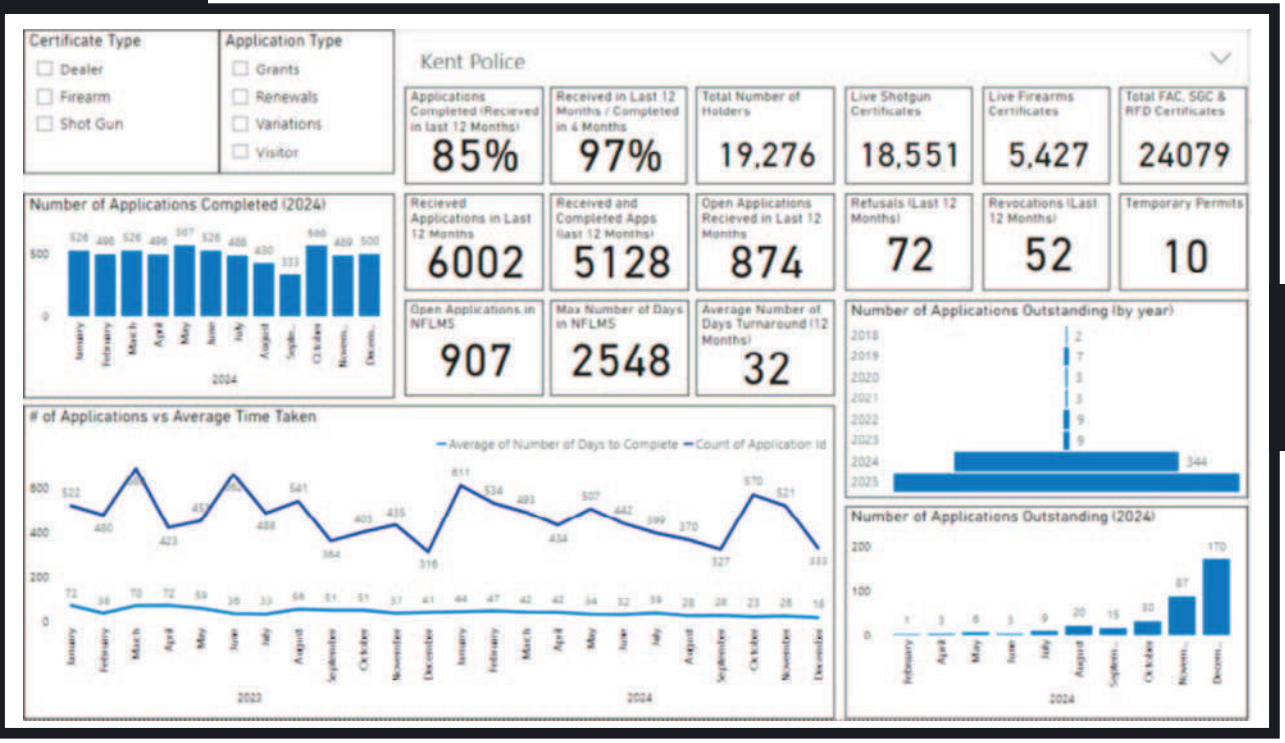
Kent Police

Budget	£1,040,209	**FTE staff**	30
Projected income	£735,000	**Annual certificates**	4,842
Certificates per staff	161	**Cost per certificate**	£215
Percentage comp 4-month	95%	**Temp permits**	10
Average TRT days	32	**Revs & refs**	0.51%
Satisfaction position	9th	**Overall ranking**	9th

The performance figures for Kent's FLD reflect a very good overall performance, with no real causes for concern. This is further reflected by the very positive feedback in the BASC satisfaction survey. BASC did have issues with some of the decision making at a senior level in the force, with one superintendent implying that risk management played no part in their decision making. While this perspective lacks any rational coherence, we believe the individual is no longer part of the decision-making team, so the department can now move forward constructively.

The force has an IAG and regular 'Flag' meetings to liaise with stakeholders, and the chief constable has confirmed all additional funds from the fees increase will go into the FLD.

NFLMS data



Lancashire Police

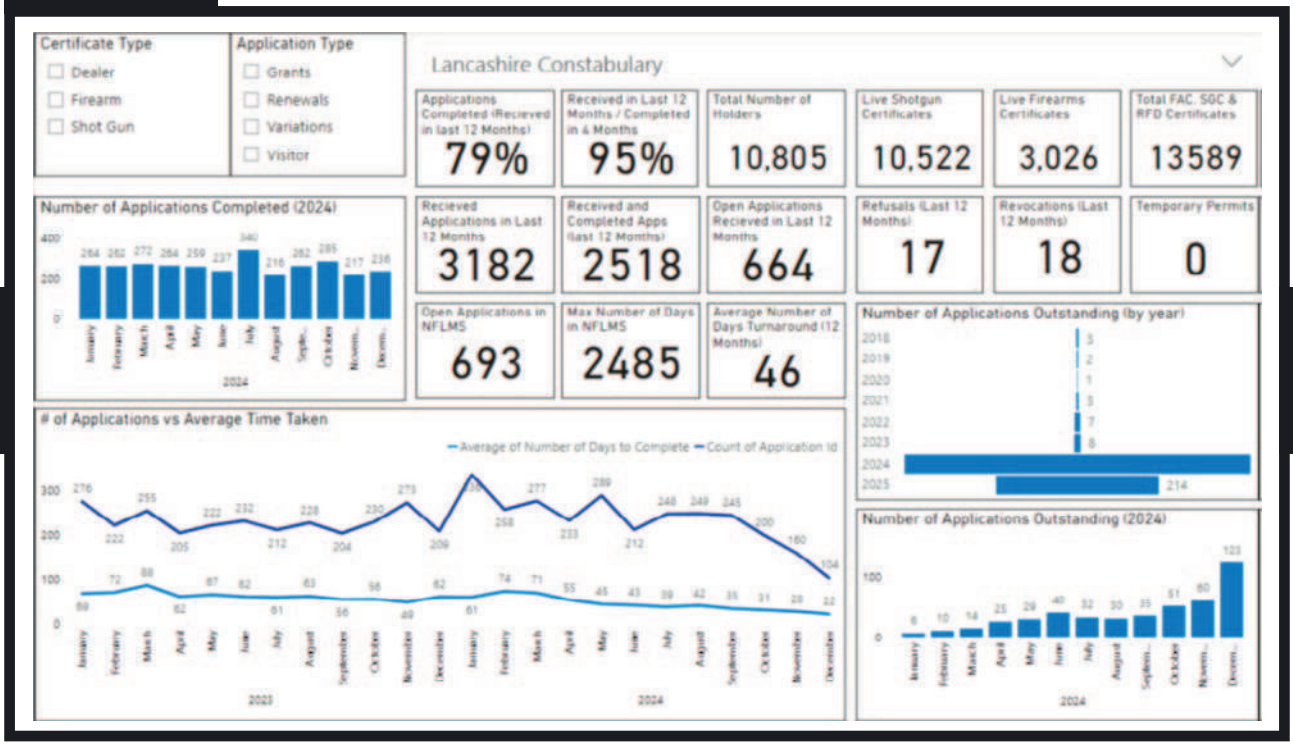
Budget	£312,951	**FTE staff**	13
Projected income	£417,662	**Annual certificates**	2,752
Certificates per staff	212	**Cost per certificate**	£114*
Percentage comp 4-month	94%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	46	**Revs & refs**	0.26%
Satisfaction position	18th	**Overall ranking**	17th

This is another force that is achieving good levels in performance. It also appears to do this at the most efficient rate of any force in the UK, although there is a question mark over whether all elements of the department's budget have been captured. Complaints from BASC members are rare and normally resolved quickly. The force is very proactive, attending both national and regional shows. The only issue is a backlog with respect to grants.

Communications with BASC are excellent, with regular meetings to resolve any issues, or flag any initiatives by the force. The head of the department recently completed his tenure, but there is no reason to suspect his successor will be less effective. The force is also moving to a digitally based system which should further improve efficiency. The additional funds from the increased fees have been ring-fenced for the FLD.

*The cost per certificate reflects a low figure for the departmental budget

NFLMS data



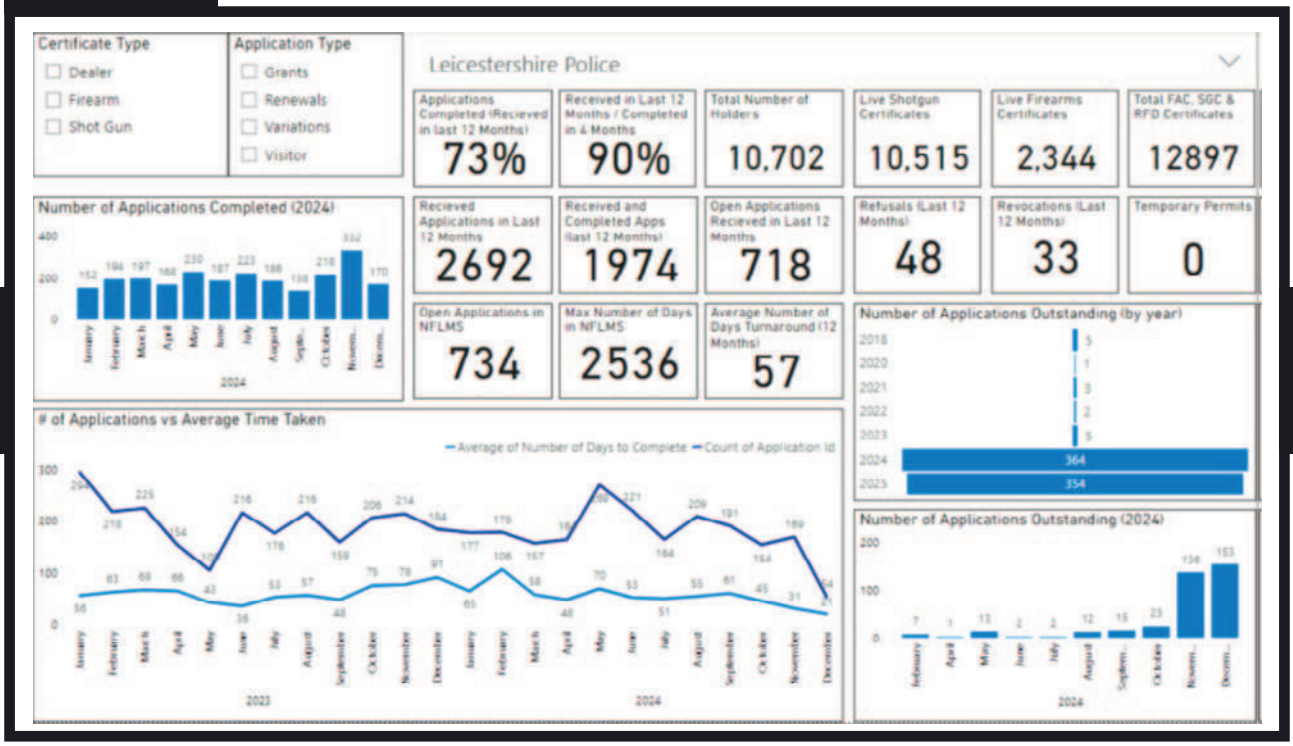
Leicestershire Police

Budget	£575,923	**FTE staff**	14.4
Projected income	£392,791	**Annual certificates**	2,592
Certificates per staff	180	**Cost per certificate**	£222
Percentage comp 4-month	89%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	57	**Revs & refs**	0.63%
Satisfaction position	28th	**Overall ranking**	26th

Leicestershire's FLD sits midway in many of the performance parameters. The number of staff per certificate is exactly the median. There have been issues with delays with grants, but turnaround times have improved. Costs are slightly above average.

The PCC has committed to supporting the department, but not explicitly ring-fenced the budget for the FLD. Communications with BASC are good, with meetings and regular calls with the head of the department. Stakeholder engagement would be further enhanced by setting up an IAG in accordance with the recommendation in the CoP's APP.

NFLMS data



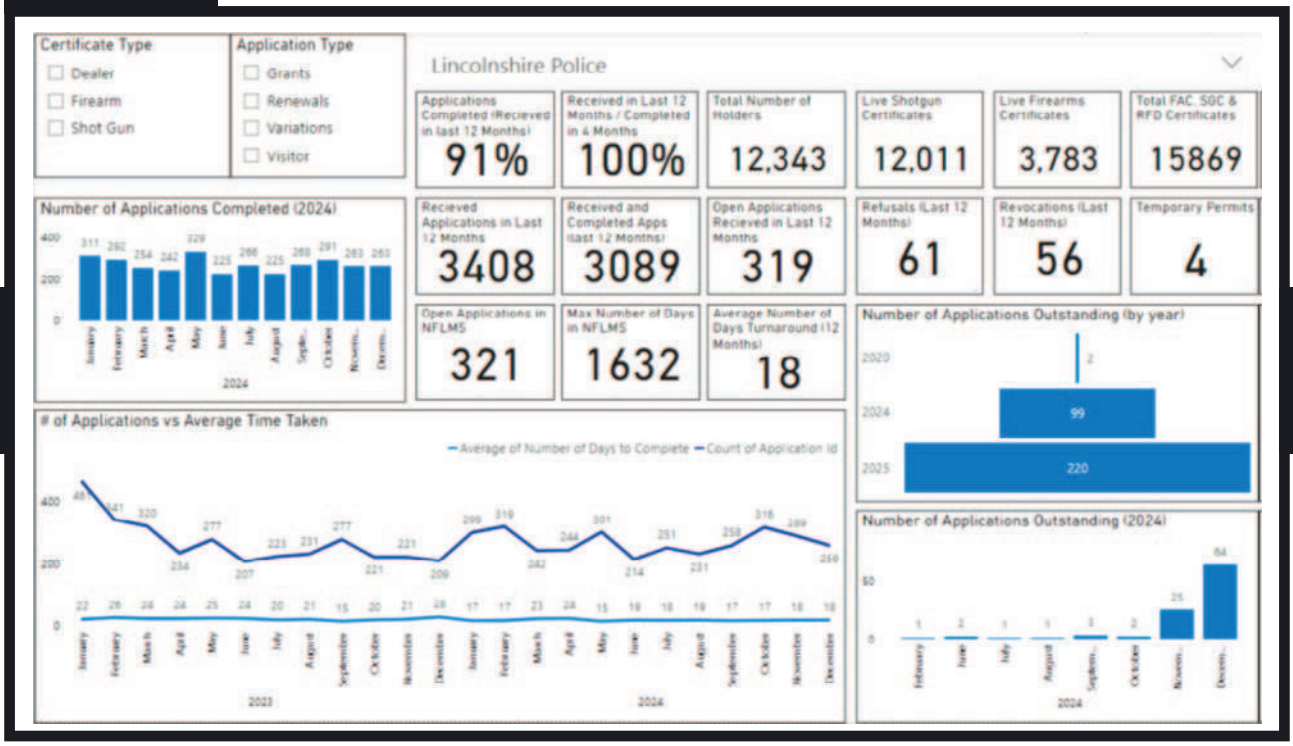
Lincolnshire Police

Budget	£938,883	**FTE staff**	20.3
Projected income	£485,280	**Annual certificates**	3,195
Certificates per staff	157	**Cost per certificate**	£294
Percentage comp 4-month	100%	**Temp permits**	4
Average TRT days	18	**Revs & refs**	0.74%
Satisfaction position	7th	**Overall ranking**	6th

Lincolnshire's FLD is in the enviable position of having the best turnaround times of any force in the UK. Its operating system is unique and, although expensive and well-resourced, it is undoubtedly highly effective. Satisfaction rates in the BASC survey are very good.

Communication with the department is also good, with regular contact between the BASC regional staff and the FLD. The PCC is very supportive, not just in his capacity as the PCC for Lincolnshire, but in raising awareness of firearms licensing issues in the Association of PCCs. Although we are still awaiting a decision by the chief constable on the additional funding from fees, the evidence suggests the force's senior leadership team is strongly supportive of the department.

NFLMS data



Merseyside Police

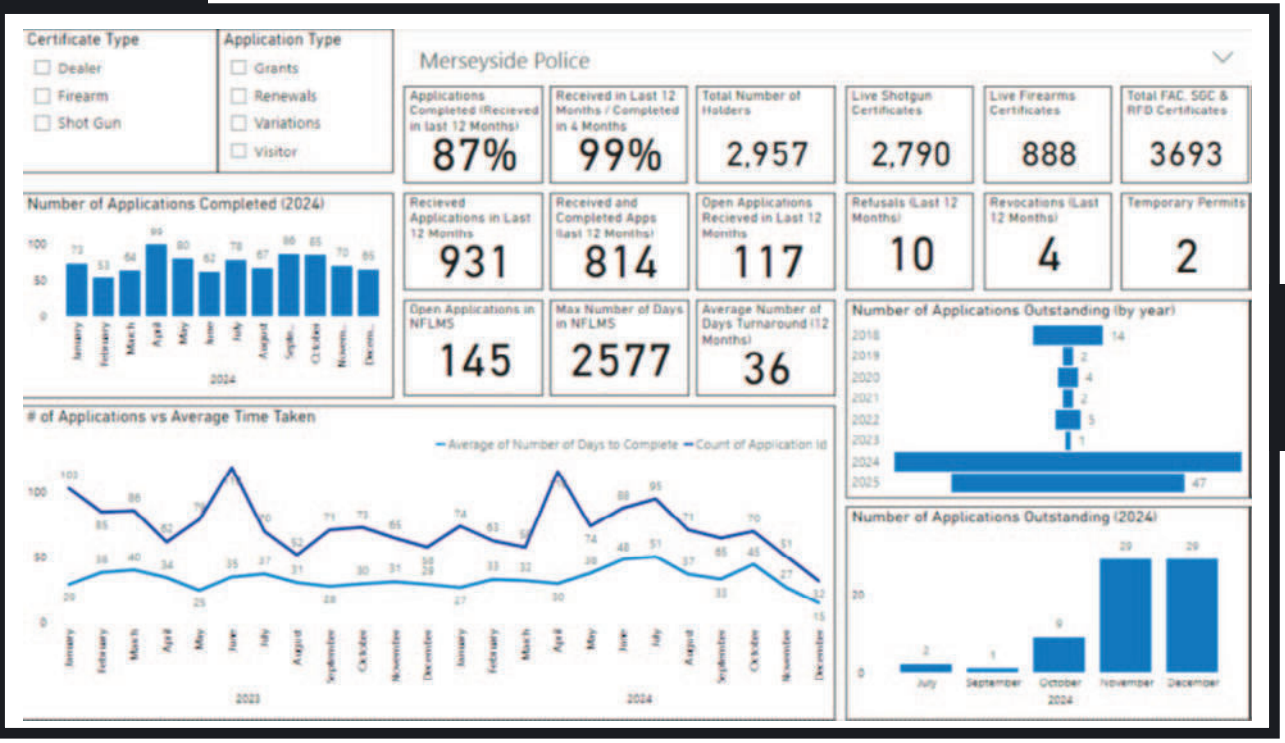
Budget	£300,322	**FTE staff**	8
Projected income	£143,099	**Annual certificates**	944
Certificates per staff	118	**Cost per certificate**	£318
Percentage comp 4-month	99%	**Temp permits**	2
Average TRT days	36	**Revs & refs**	0.38%
Satisfaction position	10th	**Overall ranking**	10th

Merseyside's FLD has some of the best turnaround times in the UK for grants and renewals. This is combined with very favourable feedback from the BASC satisfaction survey. Costs are high, and BASC is concerned that it has not received any confirmation that the increase in fees will be ring-fenced for use within the department.

Perhaps because of the relatively small number of certificate holders, engagement with BASC is infrequent, but there is an excellent working relationship with our regional staff. BASC has recently provided training for both the FLD and its Rural Crime Unit. Complaints are rare and the head of the department has always engaged positively when issues arise.

It has a six-monthly IAG which invites a variety of key stakeholders.

NFLMS data



Metropolitan Police

Budget	£4,280,000*	**FTE staff**	54.2
Projected income	£759,441	**Annual certificates**	5,017
Certificates per staff	93	**Cost per certificate**	£853*
Percentage comp 4-month	85%	**Temp permits**	9
Average TRT days	57	**Revs & refs**	0.69%
Satisfaction position	25th	**Overall ranking**	25th

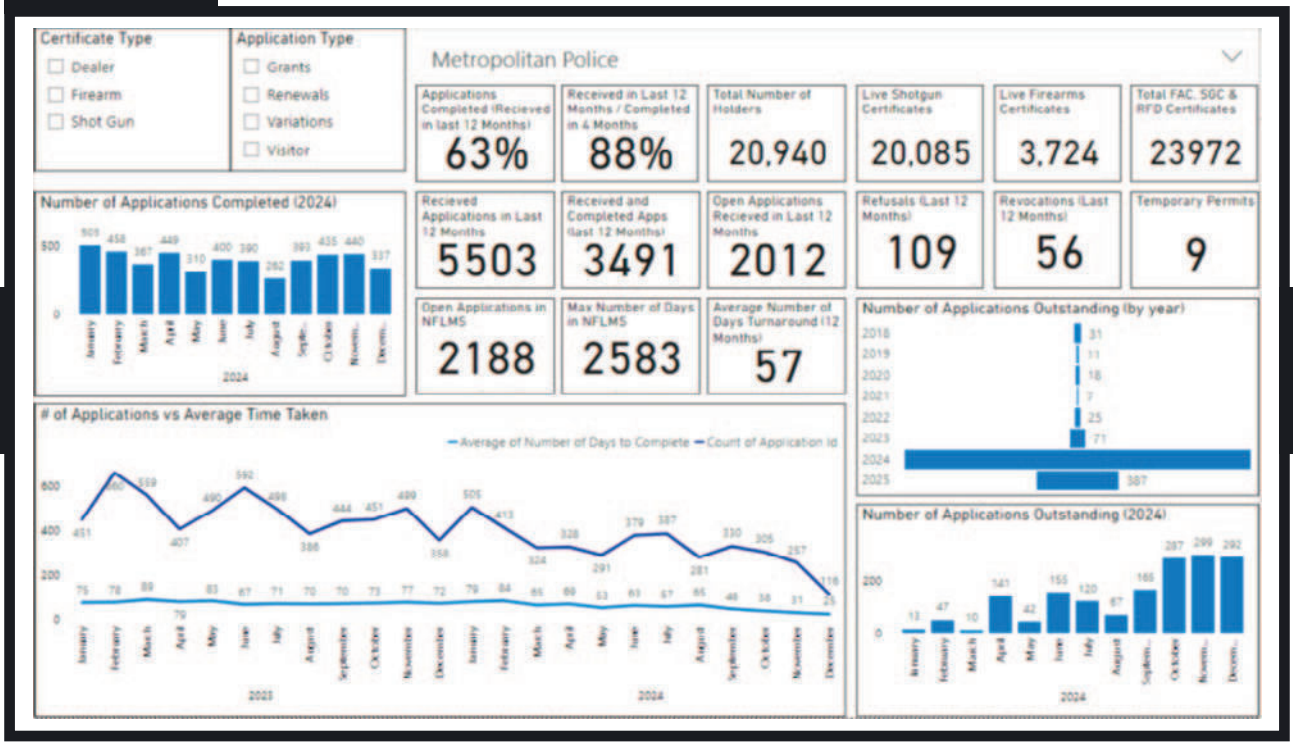
Comparison with other forces is challenging, as the structure of the department is unique, being comprised of warranted officers. The apparent costs are astronomical, but BASC suspects that as officers are engaged with other areas of policing, the figure is not comparable with other force budgets.

In terms of performance, there are few problems with renewals, but historically there have been some substantial delays in grants. The author understands this is sometimes exacerbated by officers being abstracted for operational reasons.

BASC has had to challenge the FLD on occasions for the use of non-statutory forms. While such forms can be useful to FEOs, they should be clearly identified and explanation given for their purpose. Otherwise, communications between the FLD and BASC are very good, with regular meetings with the BASC regional director and firearms officer.

*Budget figures are not comparable to other forces. See text.

NFLMS data



Norfolk and Suffolk Police

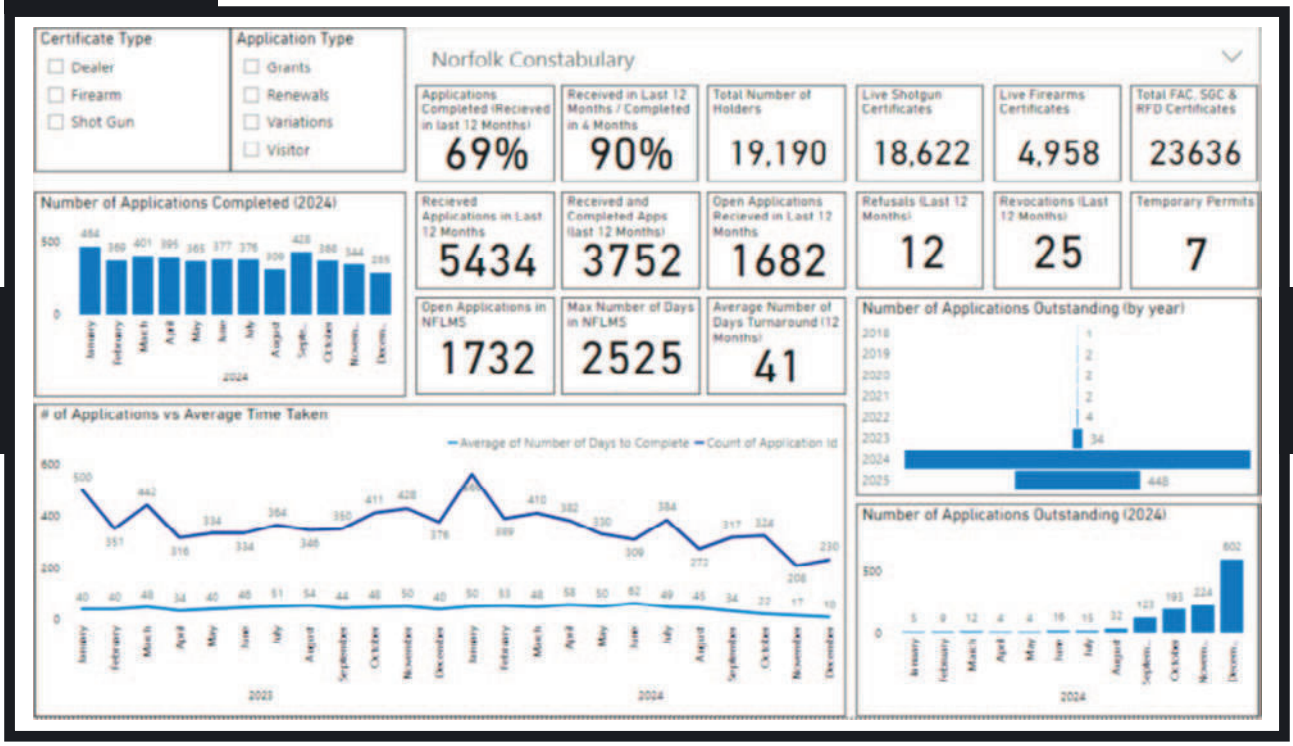
Budget	£1,112,250	**FTE staff**	28.2
Projected income	£1,325,765	**Annual certificates**	8,738
Certificates per staff	346	**Cost per certificate**	£127
Percentage comp 4-month	87% & 73%	**Temp permits**	8
Average TRT days	51	**Revs & refs**	0.15%
Satisfaction position	19th	**Overall ranking**	18th

Norfolk and Suffolk's collaborative FLD has the challenge of having the highest number of certificates of any licensing department in the England and Wales. It is therefore to its credit that it appears to be the most cost-effective FLD.

However, BASC does have some concerns that it is struggling to service the demands of the two forces. This is reflected in delays in grants and failure to meet FELWG's benchmark four-month completion time for all applications received. The 346 certificates per member of staff is the highest recorded. Further investment in the department is urgently needed to meet the standard required. The PCCs from both forces have agreed to ring-fence the additional fees, so this should be possible. It should also be noted that, in meetings with BASC, they have been strongly supportive of the department.

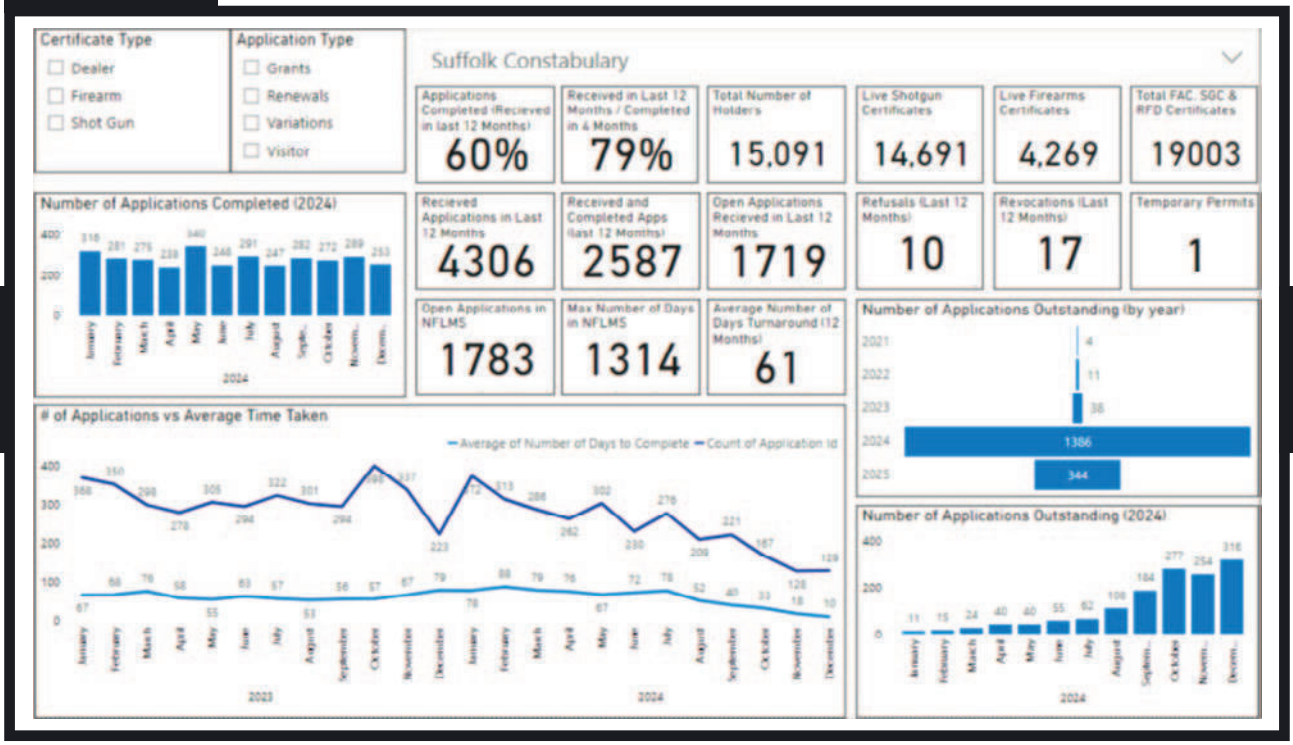
Communications with the FLD are good, with regular meetings between the manager and the BASC regional director and firearms officer.

NFLMS data



Norfolk and Suffolk Police continued

NFLMS data



North Yorkshire Police

Budget	£378,485	**FTE staff**	13.53
Projected income	£729,323	**Annual certificates**	4,795
Certificates per staff	354	**Cost per certificate**	£79*
Percentage comp 4-month	91%	**Temp permits**	13
Average TRT days	28	**Revs & refs**	0.21%
Satisfaction position	8th	**Overall ranking**	8th

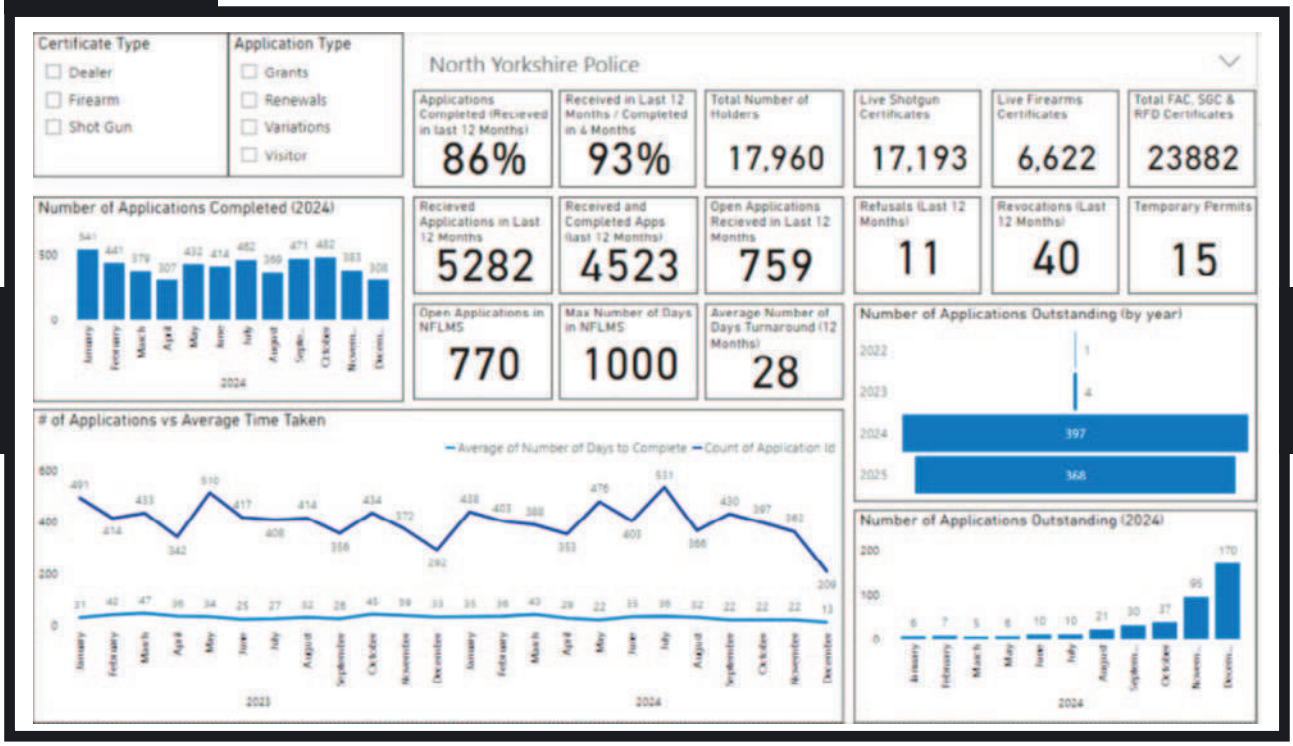
North Yorkshire Police's FLD consistently receives positive feedback from BASC members. It is rare to receive complaints on timeliness, with virtually all renewals completed before expiry and the majority of grants completed in less than four months.

The FLD is proactive in attending shooting shows and game fairs, often completing variations for certificate holders on the day. Its interactions with regional BASC staff and the firearms team are always constructive, with the head of the department regarding BASC as a critical friend. The force has also made use of training provided by BASC, both for the FLD and its rural crime team. There is currently no IAG, but this is being considered.

The only concern relates to the number of staff to deal with certificates, which could lead to resilience issues. The force, however, is committed to ring-fencing funds for the FLD and will seek to grow the department in the future.

*This figure seems very low and may reflect elements missing from the budget.

NFLMS data



Northamptonshire Police

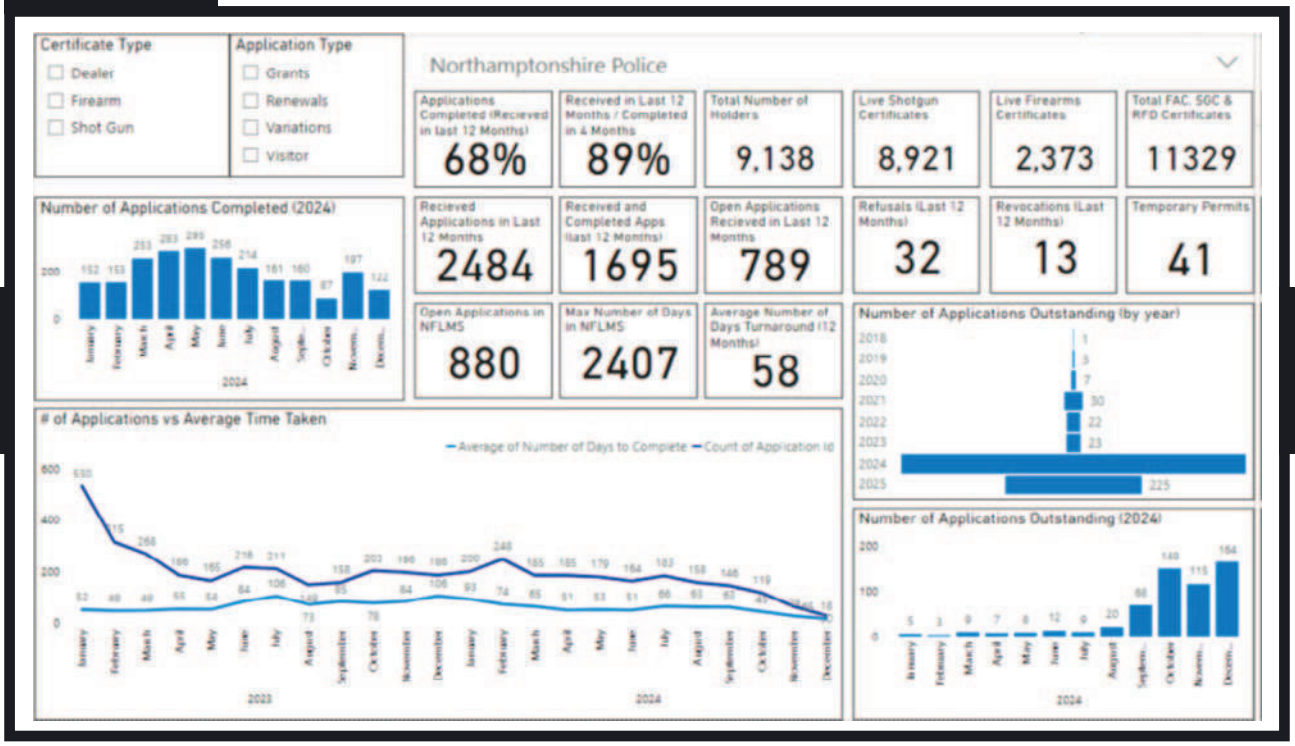
Budget	Unknown	**FTE staff**	15.12
Projected income	£346,039	**Annual certificates**	2,281
Certificates per staff	151	**Cost per certificate**	Unknown
Percentage comp 4-month	89%	**Temp permits**	41
Average TRT days	58	**Revs & refs**	0.4%
Satisfaction position	37th	**Overall ranking**	=36th

Northamptonshire has struggled since the Covid pandemic, with staffing and other internal issues. This has led to unacceptable delays. At one stage the force had substantial numbers of Section 7 permits, and although these have been much reduced, there can still be delays with the issuing of new certificates. Grants have sometimes taken over three years. This is clearly reflected in the dismal BASC satisfaction survey results.

BASC's Central regional director and head of firearms recently met with the head of the FLD to discuss the current position. Reassurance was provided that the staffing situation was much improved. It was also confirmed that funds from the increase in fees would be channelled into the department. There have also been changes to internal processes, which should streamline the service.

BASC will continue to monitor and hopes to see a considerable improvement in performance over the next 12 months. It would also be a good idea to create an IAG to better communicate the current situation to key stakeholders.

NFLMS data



Northumbria Police

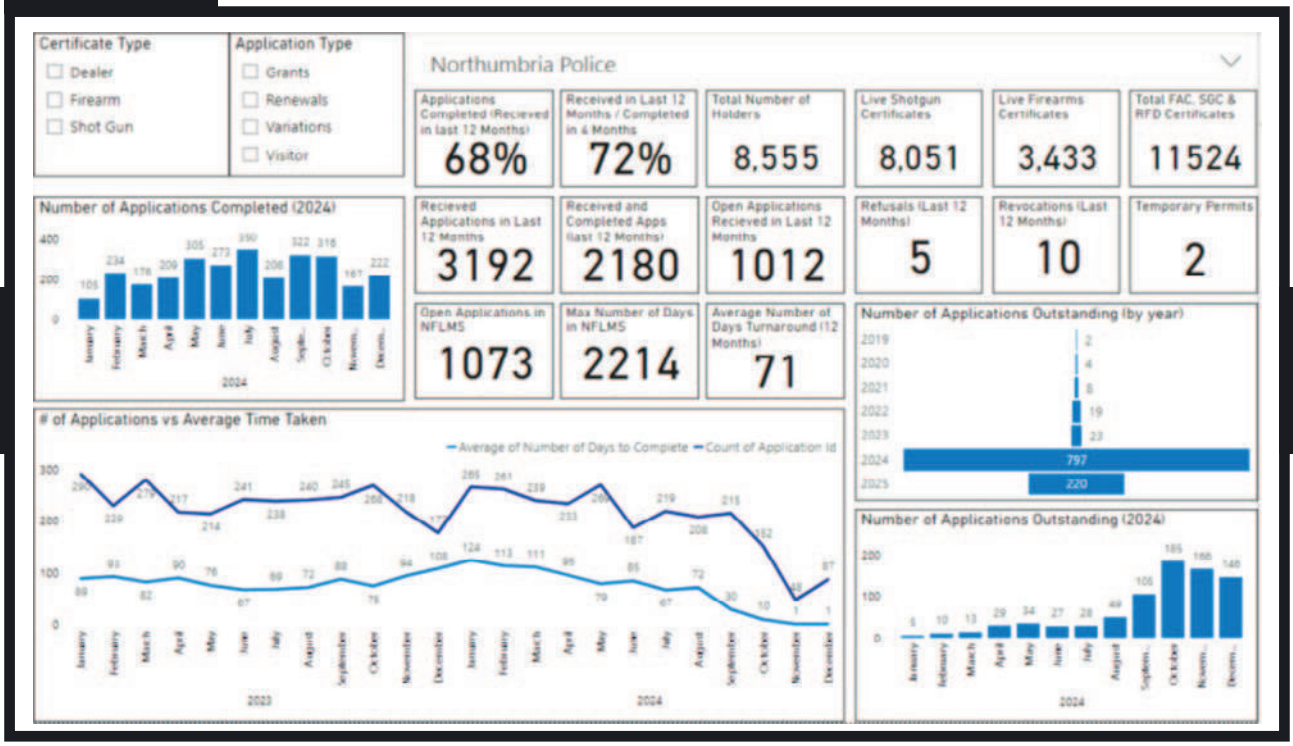
Budget	£631,000	**FTE staff**	13.22
Projected income	£355,430	**Annual certificates**	2,336
Certificates per staff	177	**Cost per certificate**	£270
Percentage comp 4-month	53%	**Temp permits**	2
Average TRT days	71	**Revs & refs**	0.13%
Satisfaction position	22nd	**Overall ranking**	24th

Northumbria's FLD is another force which has struggled with staffing; an issue which has hopefully been resolved. This, however, has led to delays, particularly with respect to grants. Its costs are also relatively high, considering the ratio of certificates per staff member. This normally suggests internal processes could be improved.

Satisfaction levels expressed in the BASC survey are around average. Most of the complaints BASC receives are around suitability reviews. There has been a recent change of management, and they are looking to improve the performance of the department. The new head of department has a good relationship with the BASC regional firearms officer.

The PCC is supportive and has confirmed that the funds from the increase in fees will be ring-fenced. The force has no IAG, but is looking at setting one up with the other bordering forces.

NFLMS data



Nottinghamshire Police

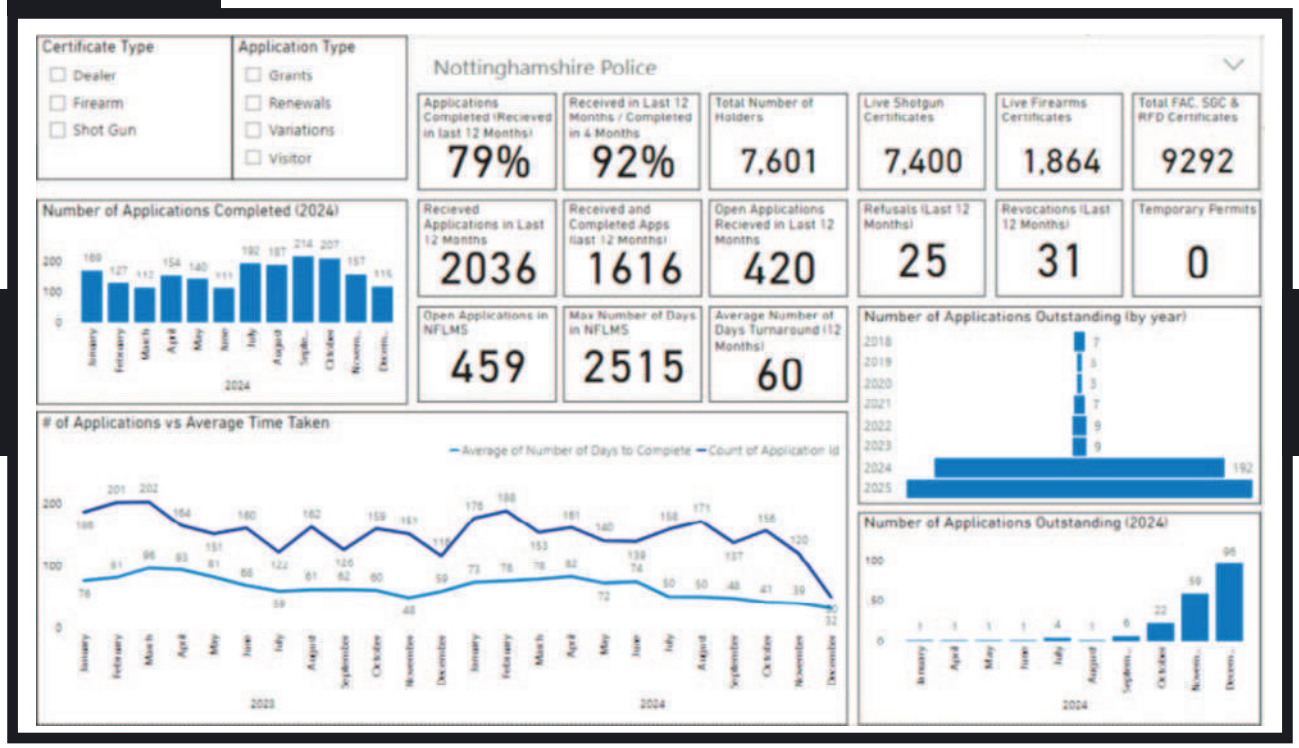
Budget	£538,620	**FTE staff**	10
Projected income	£280,635	**Annual certificates**	1,850
Certificates per staff	185	**Cost per certificate**	£291
Percentage comp 4-month	90%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	60	**Revs & refs**	0.6%
Satisfaction position	15th	**Overall ranking**	15th

Nottinghamshire's FLD provides certificate holders with a good overall service, which is clearly reflected in the BASC satisfaction survey. However, the cost of processing each certificate is the sixth highest in England and Wales.

Communications with BASC are excellent, with regular contact on both the regional and national basis. BASC has provided awareness training over the last 12 months, and the force clearly sees the association as a critical friend, trusting the BASC firearms staff to be able to advise on areas requiring specialist knowledge, such as antiques.

The force also has an IAG to communicate with the key stakeholders. Overall, there are no issues for concern.

NFLMS data



North Wales Police

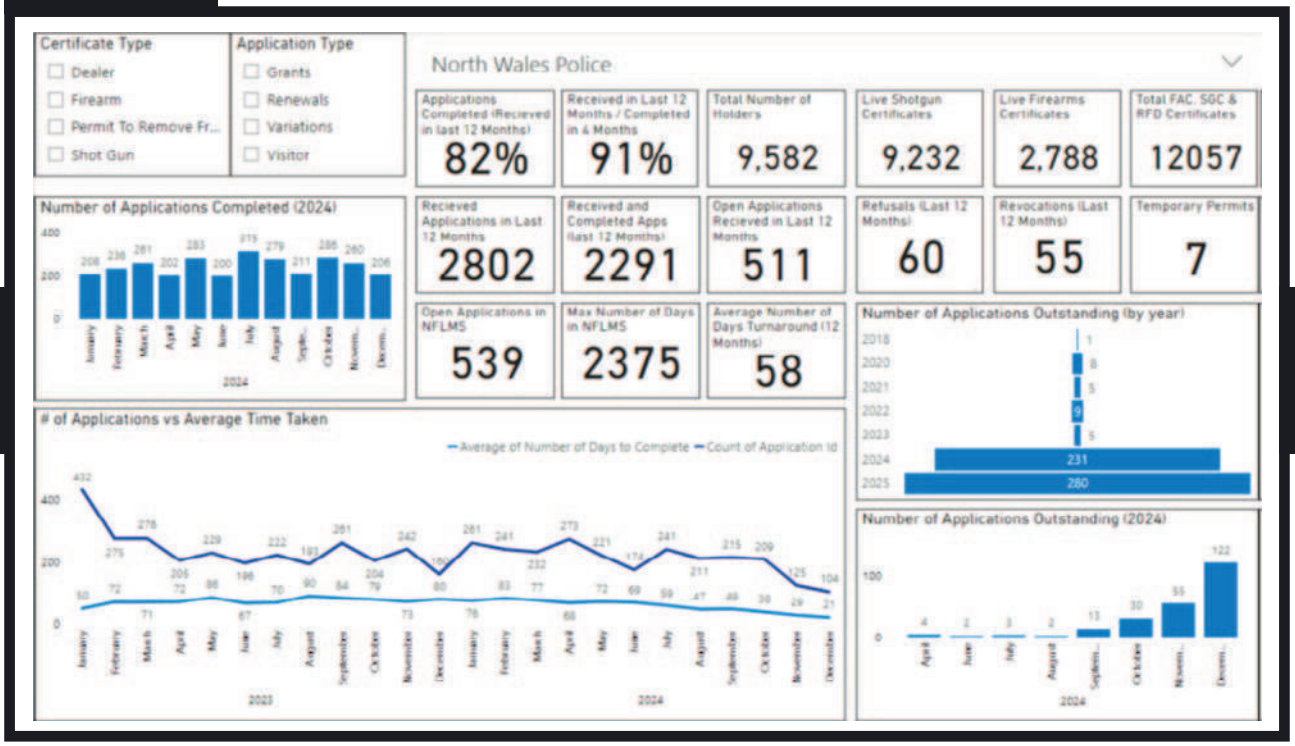
Budget	Unknown	**FTE staff**	17.7
Projected income	£608,343	**Annual certificates**	4,024
Certificates per staff	277	**Cost per certificate**	Unknown
Percentage comp 4-month	88%	**Temp permits**	7
Average TRT days	58	**Revs & refs**	0.95%
Satisfaction position	21st	**Overall ranking**	21st

As the force in which BASC's HQ is based, the association has considerable interaction with North Wales's FLD. The head of the department is one of a number of licensing managers who have worked with BASC to improve customer service in both organisations, as well as BASC's understanding of the issues facing FLDs.

Overall, performance is good, although there have been some recent delays with grants. The PCC is strongly supportive, although we are still to receive confirmation that the funds from increased fees will be ring-fenced for use in the FLD.

The percentage of revocations and refusals is about twice the average, but BASC gets few complaints and, where decisions have been challenged as disproportionate, the issues have been resolved. BASC would recommend the setting up of an IAG in accordance with the CoP's APP recommendation as a way of improving communications with stakeholders.

NFLMS data



South Wales Police

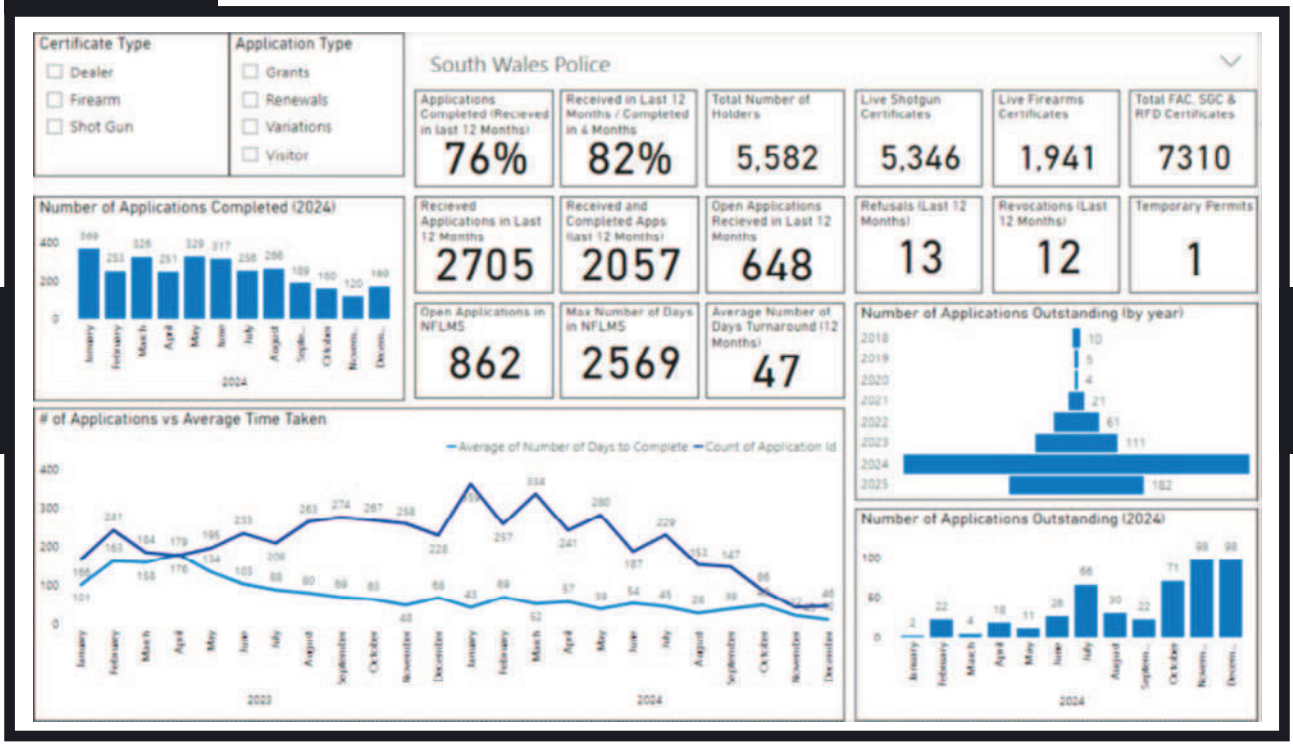
Budget	Unknown	**FTE staff**	27
Projected income	£216,586	**Annual certificates**	1,425
Certificates per staff	53	**Cost per certificate**	Unknown
Percentage comp 4-month	51%	**Temp permits**	1
Average TRT days	47	**Revs & refs**	0.34%
Satisfaction position	35th	**Overall ranking**	35th

South Wales Police has experienced severe delays in dealing with certificate applications, particularly in respect of grants. The latter can take up to three years to process. Unsurprisingly, this is reflected by a very poor satisfaction level recorded in the BASC survey.

Nevertheless, there have been significant changes recently. The FLD's strategic management has changed, with the department having moved into a different business area of the force. This has coincided with an uplift in staff and the embracing of digital technology in the licensing process. The changes have resulted in considerable improvement and, at the time of writing, all renewals are being processed prior to expiry. Grants are also being processed at a higher rate, although there is still much progress to be made.

Communications with BASC are excellent, with frequent meetings and updates with the BASC regional team. The establishment of an IAG in accordance with the CoP's APP would be likely to further enhance communication with stakeholders and would offer an opportunity to disseminate the more positive news. BASC understands the PCC is going to oversee the instigation of an IAG.

NFLMS data



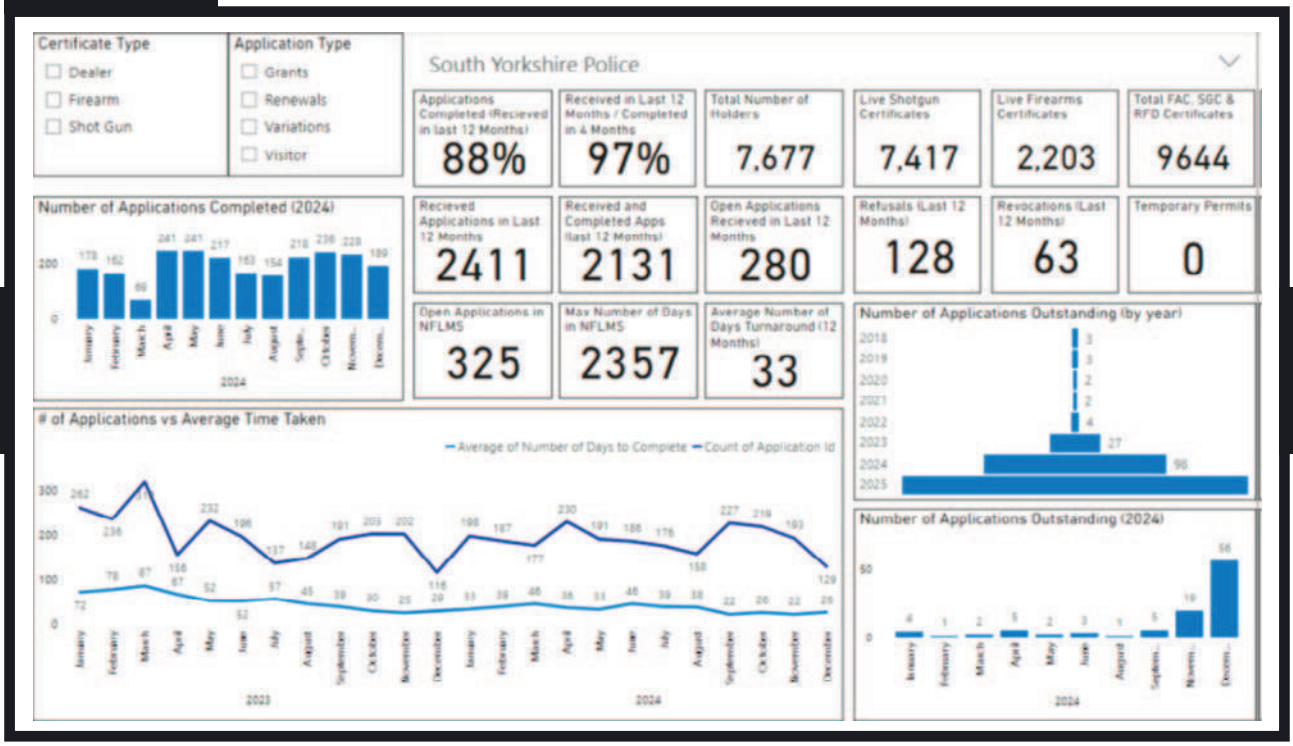
South Yorkshire Police

Budget	£335,466	**FTE staff**	11.1
Projected income	£298,205	**Annual certificates**	1,965
Certificates per staff	177	**Cost per certificate**	£171
Percentage comp 4-month	97%	**Temp permits**	0
Average TRT days	33	**Revs & refs**	2%
Satisfaction position	13th	**Overall ranking**	13th

Overall, South Yorkshire shows very good levels of performance. Both grants and renewals have rapid turnarounds and this is achieved at below average cost. There is a concern that the high level of revocations and refusals, four times the national average, may suggest poor risk management. There are, however, few complaints, and the head of the FLD is always happy to discuss decisions. Satisfaction levels are very good.

Although the PCC has replied to BASC's enquiries on the ring-fencing of the additional fees, we are still to receive a positive confirmation that this will be the case. We would also suggest the force set up an IAG in accordance with the recommendation in the CoP's APP.

NFLMS data



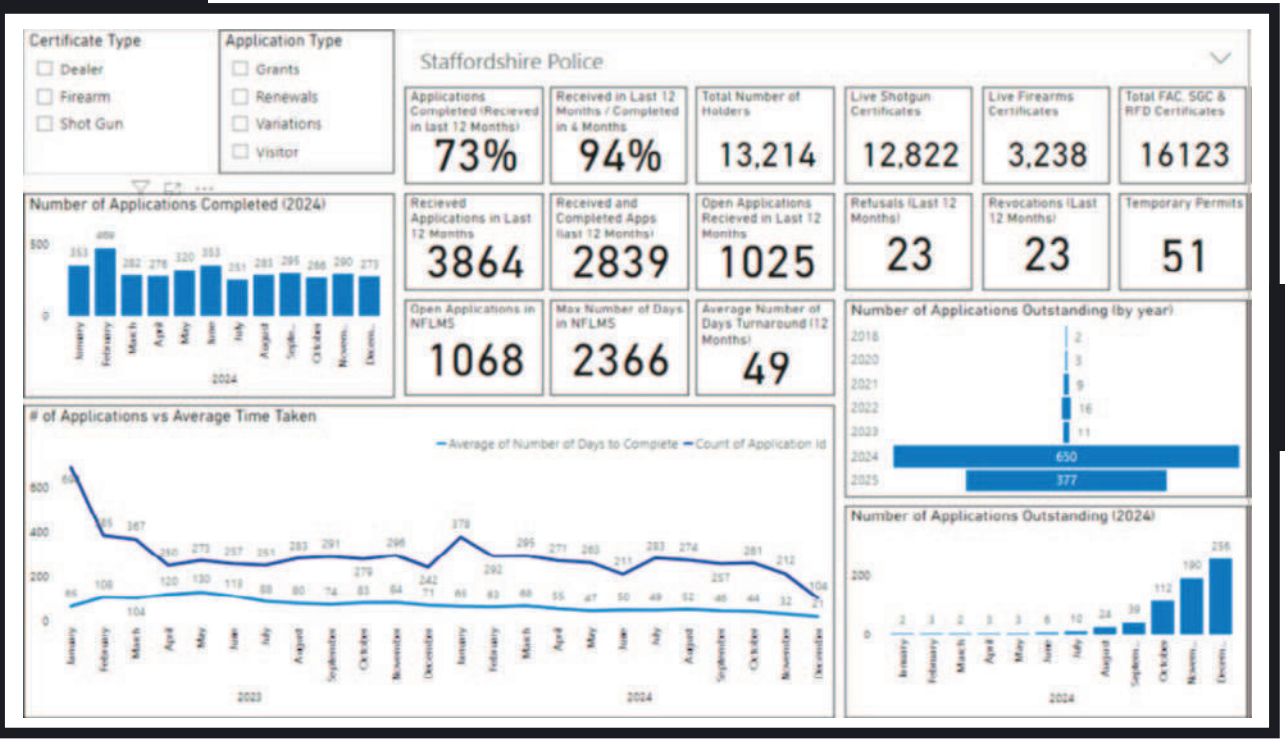
Staffordshire and West Midlands Police

Budget	£1,055,546	**FTE staff**	Unknown
Projected income	£774,147	**Annual certificates**	5,106
Certificates per staff	Unknown	**Cost per certificate**	£207
Percentage comp 4-month	91% & 81%	**Temp permits**	95
Average TRT days	50	**Revs & refs**	0.34%
Satisfaction position	=26th	**Overall ranking**	27th

The collaboration between Staffordshire and the West Midlands has struggled recently with turnaround times, particularly with grants. BASC suspects that differing support levels from the two forces may not help matters. Although we cannot comment on the engagement of chief officers, there is considerable difference in the support offered by the two PCCs. Staffordshire's PCC is very supportive, whereas the West Midlands PCC simply complains about the cost of the department. This difference was emphasised by Staffordshire's PCC confirming the additional fees will be ring-fenced for the department, whereas there has been no response from the West Midlands PCC.

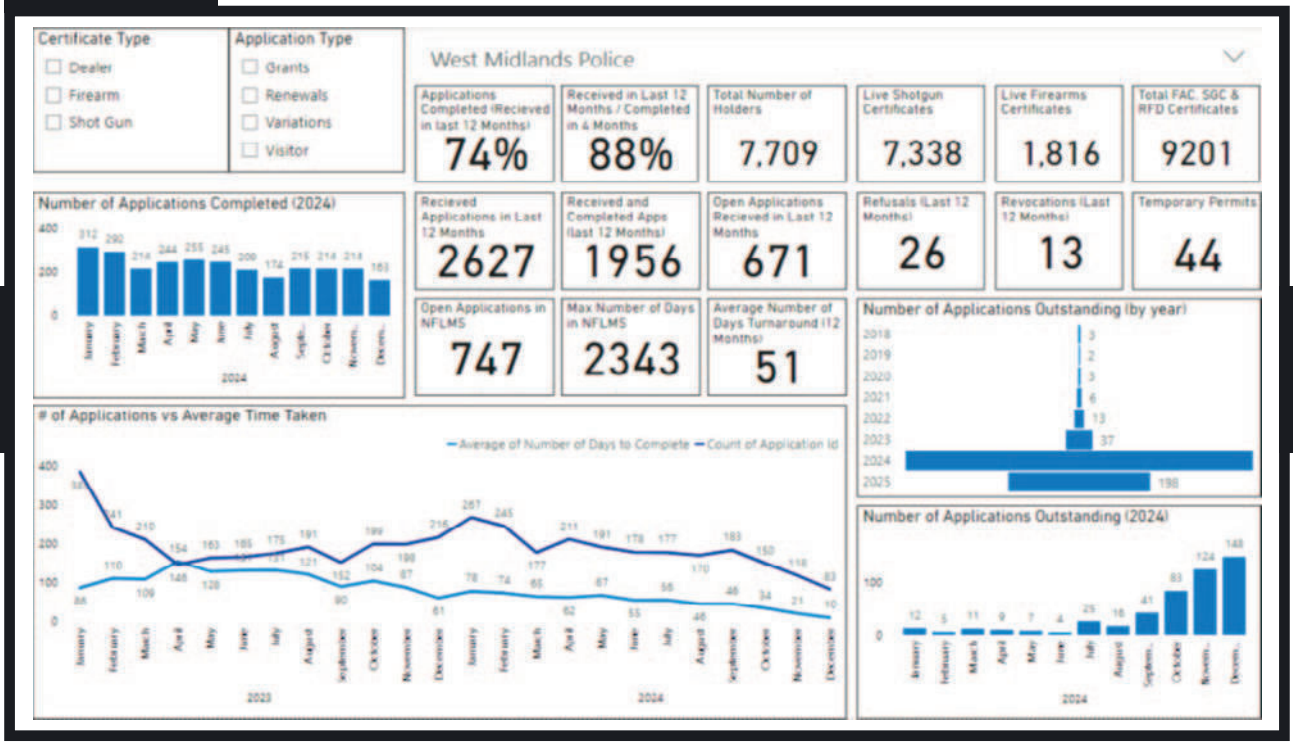
Satisfaction levels are in line with timeliness issues, which is also the main reason for complaints. Communication with the head of the FLD is good, and we would encourage the establishment of a IAG in accordance with the recommendation by the CoP's APP. This will help build relationships with other stakeholders. BASC understands that this is expected to happen in the next 12 months. The FLD is also looking at receiving some CPD training from BASC.

NFLMS data



Staffordshire and West Midlands continued

NFLMS data



Surrey and Sussex Police

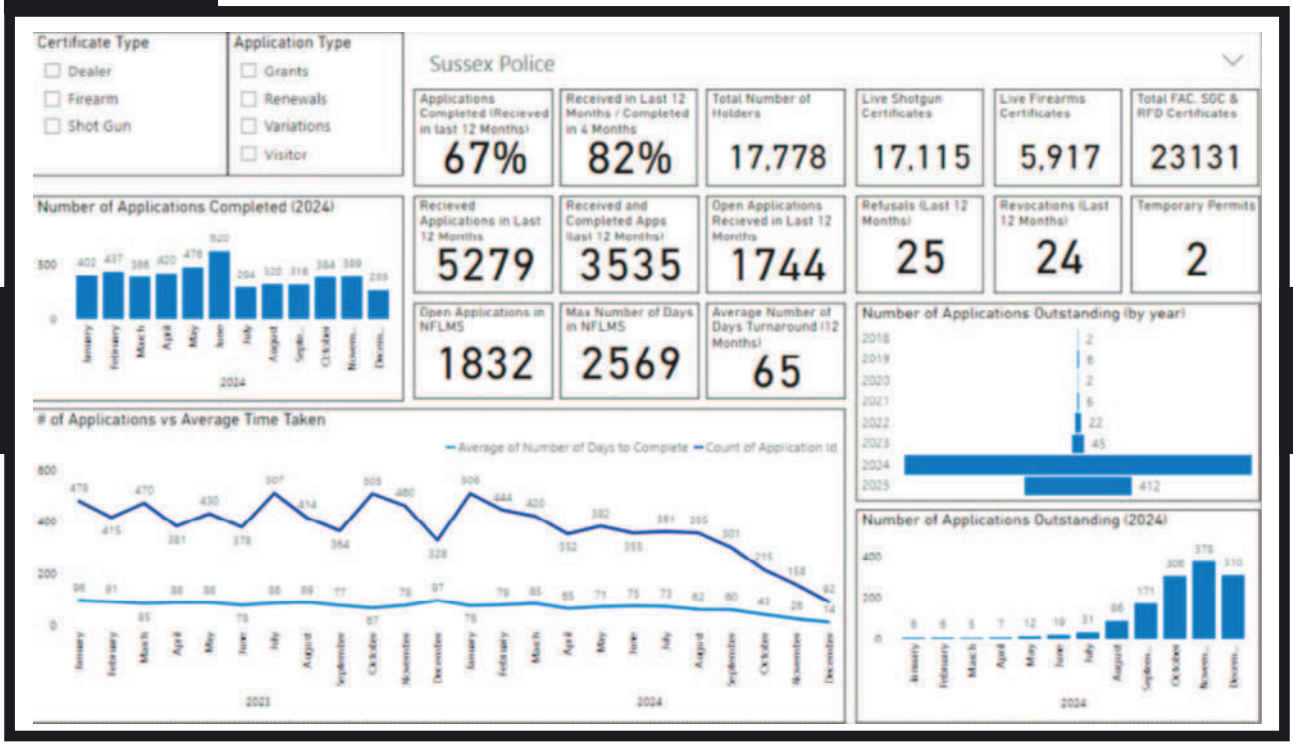
Budget	£1,331,055	**FTE staff**	30
Projected income	£1,122,651	**Annual certificates**	7,392
Certificates per staff	246	**Cost per certificate**	£180
Percentage comp 4-month	79%	**Temp permits**	6
Average TRT days	34 & 65	**Revs & refs**	0.26%
Satisfaction position	20th	**Overall ranking**	20th

Historically, the performance of the Surrey and Sussex collaboration has been good. Recently, problems with staffing have led to delays, particularly with grants. There have also been occasions where certificate holders have been encouraged to apply early, but still heard nothing at the end of the Section 28B extension period. BASC believes that the high numbers of certificates per staff member are a contributing factor; the department would benefit from additional resources.

In this context, the PCCs from both forces are very supportive, with the Sussex PCC robustly holding the chief constable to account on firearms licensing matters. The PCC was also instrumental in setting up the first IAG, which was held recently online. Both PCCs have backed the ring-fencing of the additional funds, although the chief constable of Sussex is yet to confirm this.

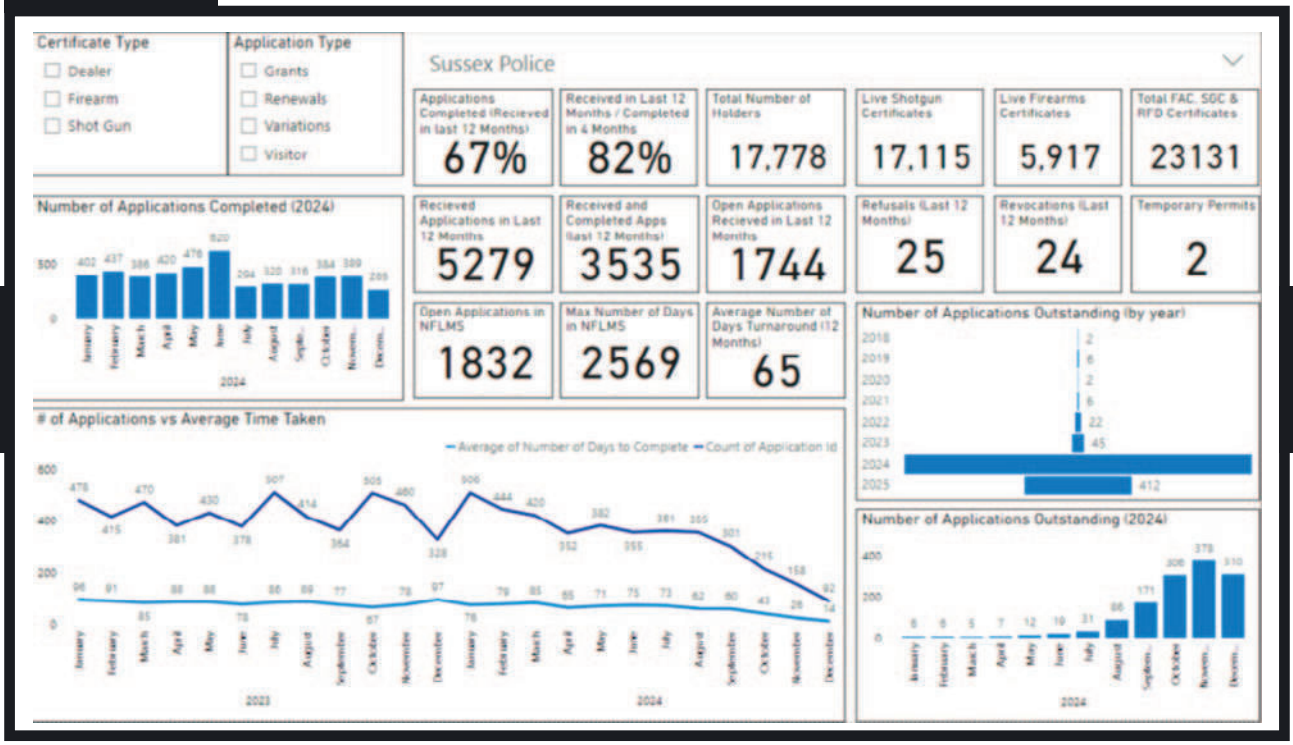
Communications with BASC are excellent, at both local and national level. This has helped in resolving any issues or complaints that have arisen.

NFLMS data



Surrey and Sussex continued

NFLMS data



Thames Valley Police

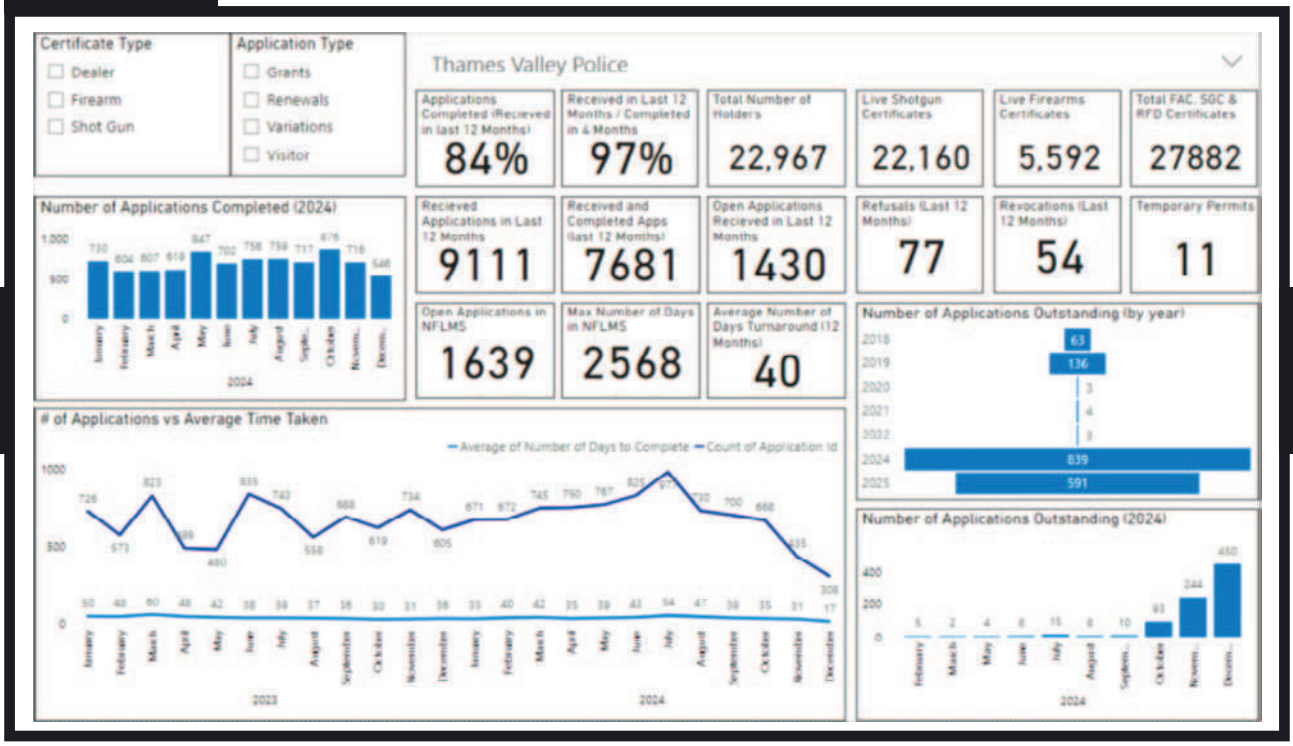
Budget	£1,090,000	**FTE staff**	23.85
Projected income	£864,605	**Annual certificates**	5,701
Certificates per staff	239	**Cost per certificate**	£191
Percentage comp 4-month	97%	**Temp permits**	2
Average TRT days	40	**Revs & refs**	0.47%
Satisfaction position	23rd	**Overall ranking**	=21st

Thames Valley's FLD shows good levels of performance, with few complaints relating to delays in both renewals and grants. That said, the department has a relatively high number of certificates per member of staff, and would benefit from additional resources. In this respect the PCC is very supportive.

Communications with the department are good, with both the BASC regional director and firearms officer engaged. The department has taken part in joint awareness training with BASC and this has helped both parties to gain a better understanding of issues. In addition, for many years the FLD has run a regular IAG, engaging with a wide range of key stakeholders, as well as FLD representatives. The meeting is also attended by the responsible chief officer.

BASC's only concern relates to decisions regarding certain calibres and land suitability. These are out of step with other forces, and have no scientific/evidence basis.

NFLMS data



Warwickshire Police

Budget	Unknown	**FTE staff**	Unknown
Projected income	£320,417	**Annual certificates**	2,111
Certificates per staff	Unknown	**Cost per certificate**	Unknown
Percentage comp 4-month	99%	**Temp permits**	2
Average TRT days	20	**Revs & refs**	1.26%
Satisfaction position	4th	**Overall ranking**	4th

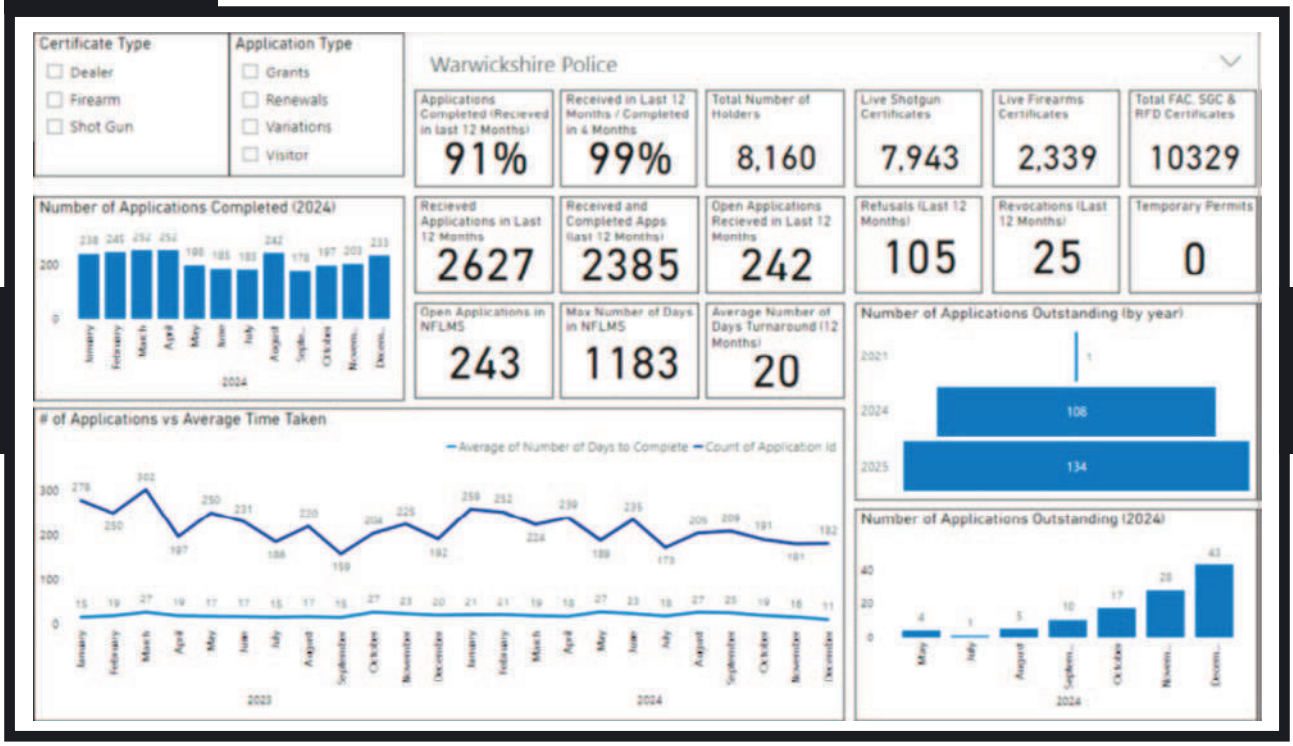
Warwickshire's FLD has consistently been one of the best performing in the UK, with grants and renewals being completed within two months. It is also proactive in its dealings with certificate holders, attending several major national shows. Communications are very good, with the force holding regular IAGs to liaise with key stakeholders.

Complaints are rare and have often been resolved after discussion. This is reflected in the results of the satisfaction survey. The only potential concern is the relatively high revocation and refusal level.

The force's ACC is the NPCC's chair of FELWG and the previous head of the department is currently the policing standards manager and NPCC strategic co-ordinator of firearms licensing at the CoP. This has been a significant point of contact over the past year, and has been instrumental in resolving issues, as well as helping to formulate longer term strategies.

The PCC is supportive, although BASC is still seeking confirmation that the additional funding is to be ring-fenced for the FLD.

NFLMS data



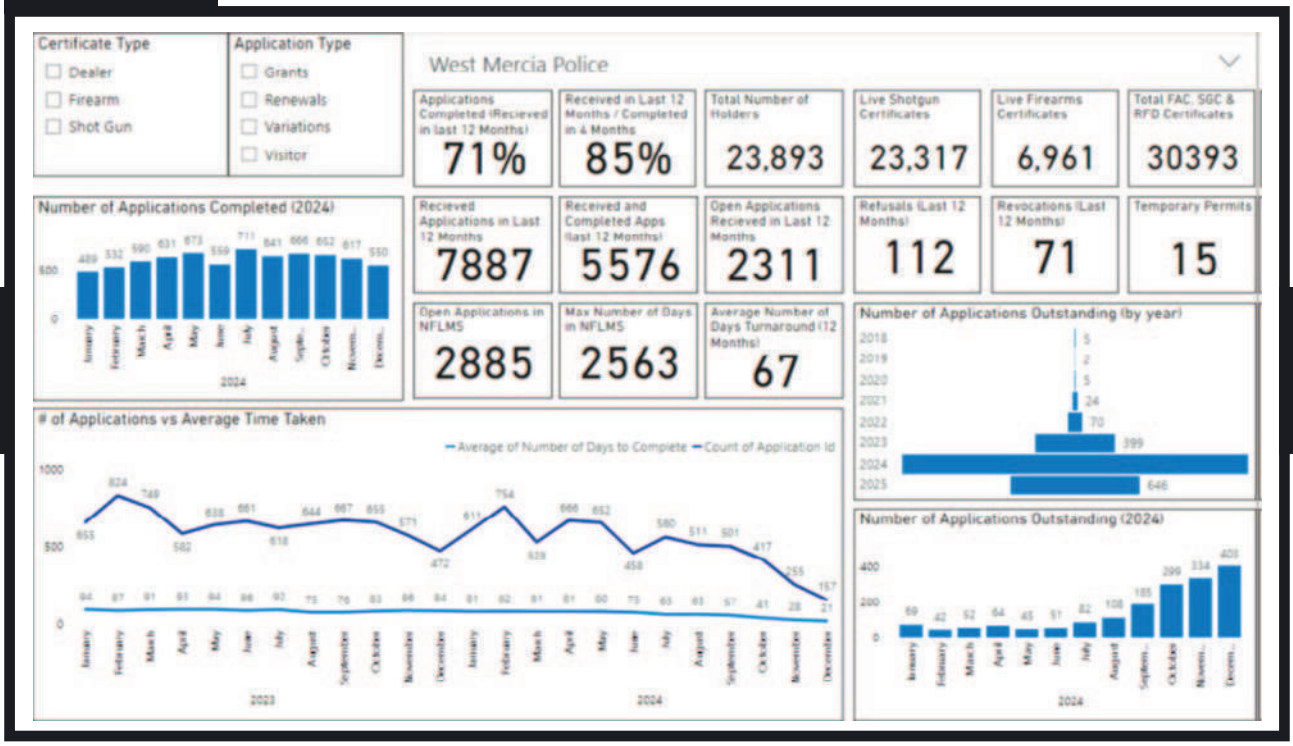
West Mercia Police

Budget	£1,440,532	**FTE staff**	50.3
Projected income	£945,377	**Annual certificates**	6,228
Certificates per staff	124	**Cost per certificate**	£231
Percentage comp 4-month	85%	**Temp permits**	15
Average TRT days	67	**Revs & refs**	0.6%
Satisfaction position	30th	**Overall ranking**	30th

West Mercia's FLD has struggled with delays over the past year, particularly with respect to grants, with some taking in excess of a year. This is reflected in the poor satisfaction levels recorded in the BASC survey. The fact that the ratio of staff per certificate is well below the median normally suggests that internal procedural issues are responsible for the problems. There have been some recent improvements, so it is hoped this trend continues.

The force communicates well, having a regular IAG for stakeholders. It has a supportive PCC who is focused on the requirements of the department. He has confirmed that all additional funds from the increase in the fees will go into the FLD.

NFLMS data



West Yorkshire Police

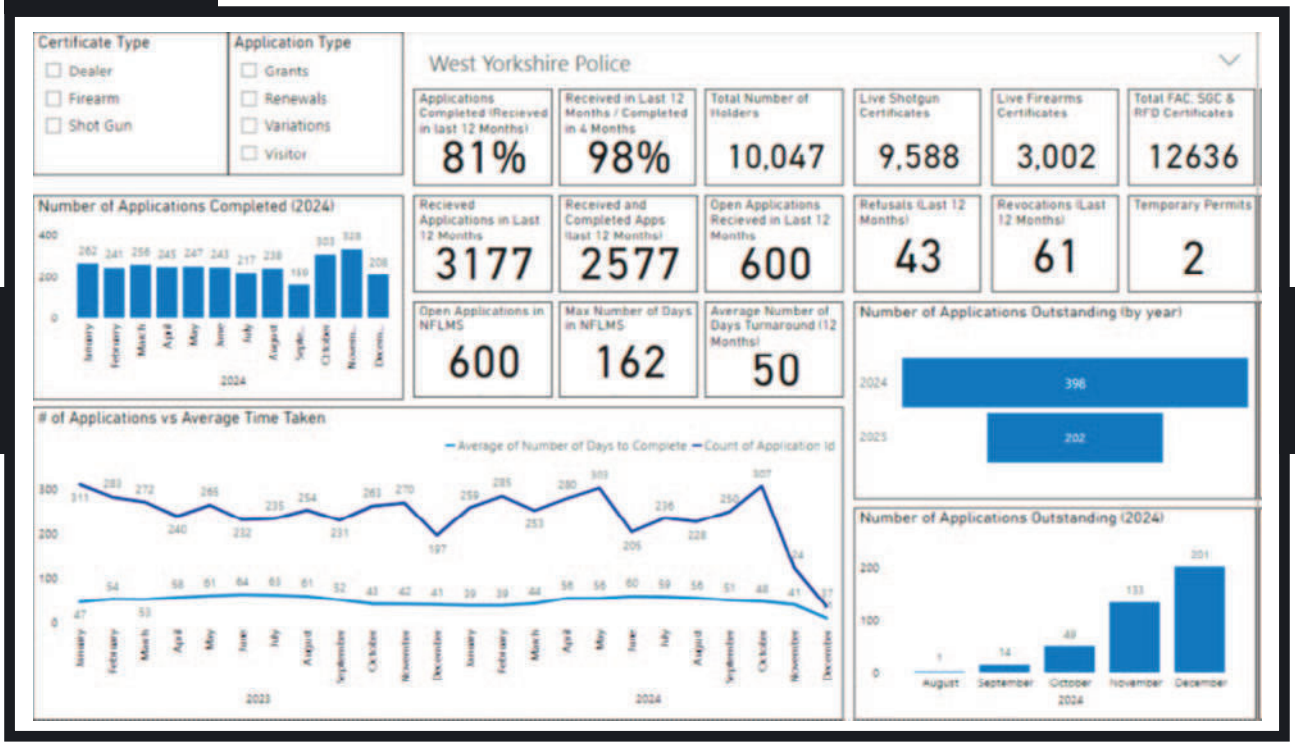
Budget	£407,688	**FTE staff**	10.4
Projected income	£389,566	**Annual certificates**	2,565
Certificates per staff	247	**Cost per certificate**	£159
Percentage comp 4-month	98%	**Temp permits**	2
Average TRT days	50	**Revs & refs**	0.82%
Satisfaction position	11th	**Overall ranking**	11th

West Yorkshire's FLD has performed particularly well, with an excellent record for timeliness, achieved at a low average cost per certificate. Satisfaction levels recorded in the BASC survey are commensurately high. The only concern is that there have been recent losses in staff, which are starting to cause delays in certain areas, particularly variations.

The department communicates well with BASC. This is reflected in the way the association was advised of recent variation delays, enabling staff to manage members' expectations. The FLD holds a regular IAG, explaining refusals and revocations, which gives confidence in the decision-making process.

Additional resources would assist the department with its resilience. The current low cost and high numbers of certificates per staff member support such an increase. The PCC and chief constable are yet to respond to BASC's request that the additional funding is channelled into the department. It is hoped that such an undertaking will be forthcoming.

NFLMS data



Wiltshire Police

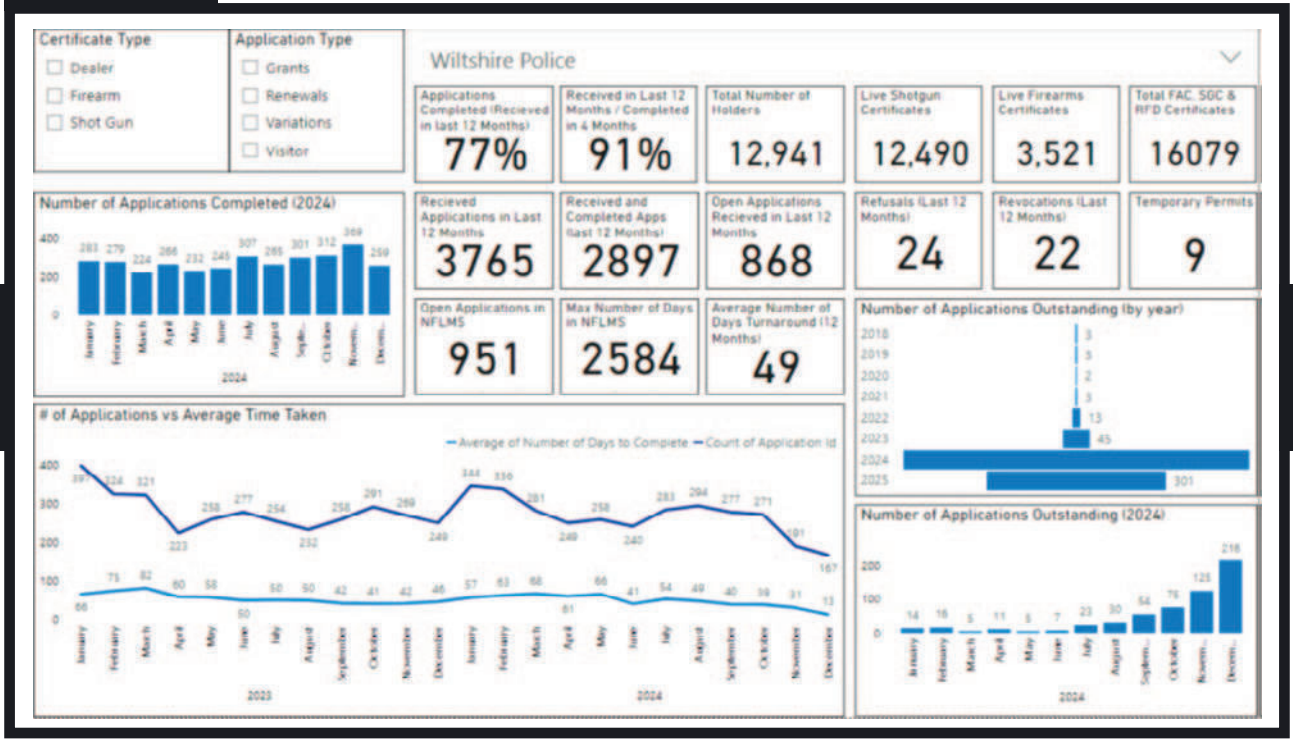
Budget	£478,270	**FTE staff**	12.13
Projected income	£494,447	**Annual certificates**	3,258
Certificates per staff	269	**Cost per certificate**	£147
Percentage comp 4-month	88%	**Temp permits**	9
Average TRT days	49	**Revs & refs**	0.29%
Satisfaction position	14th	**Overall ranking**	14th

Wiltshire's FLD is performing well, given the limited resources in the department. It has one of the lowest costs per certificate processed, and one of the highest ratios of certificates per member of staff. Satisfaction levels recorded by the BASC survey are high.

BASC is awaiting a decision from the chief constable as to whether the funds from the increased licensing fee will be invested in the force's FLD. This commitment, and the attendant additional resources for the department, would be welcome.

Communication with BASC is very good, with regular contact with the regional firearms officer. Establishing an IAG in accordance with the CoP's APP would be likely to enhance stakeholder engagement even further.

NFLMS data



Summary table

Licensing department	BASC ranking satisfaction and timeliness	Committed to ring-fencing fees for FLD in response to BASC letters from January 2025	Force is taking more than one year for grants
Avon and Somerset	16th	Awaiting CC's decision	Yes
Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire	38th	No	Yes
Cheshire	3rd	Agreed	No
Cleveland	1st	No	No
Cumbria	28th	Agreed	No
Derbyshire	2nd	Agreed	No
Devon and Cornwall	34th	No	No
Dorset	=36th	Agreed	Yes
Durham	33rd	No	No
Dyfed-Powys	12th	Agreed	No
Essex	5th	Agreed	No
Gloucestershire	31st	Agreed	Yes
GMP	19th	No	No
Gwent	32nd	No	Yes
Hampshire	23rd	Agreed	Yes
Humberside	29th	No	Yes
Kent	9th	Agreed	No
Lancashire	17th	Agreed	No
Leicestershire	26th	Awaiting CC's decision	No
Lincolnshire	6th	Awaiting CC's decision	No
Merseyside	10th	No	No
Metropolitan Police	25th	No	Yes
Norfolk and Suffolk	18th	Agreed	No
Northamptonshire	=36th	Agreed	Yes
Northumbria	24th	Agreed	No
North Wales	=21st	Awaiting CC's decision	No
North Yorkshire	8th	Agreed	No
Nottinghamshire	15th	No	No
South Wales	35th	No	Yes
South Yorkshire	13th	Awaiting CC's decision	No
Staffordshire and West Midlands	27th	Yes Staffs: No WMP	No
Surrey and Sussex	20th	Agreed	Yes
Thames Valley	=21st	Awaiting CC's decision	No
Warwickshire	4th	Awaiting CC's decision	No
West Mercia	30th	Agreed	Yes
West Yorkshire	11th	No	No
Wiltshire	14th	Awaiting CC's decision	No

Note: Police Scotland sits in 7th place but none of the other data or metrics are applicable to this force.

The Performance of Police Firearms Licensing Departments in England and Wales 2025

A statistical analysis and report by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation

Martin Parker
BASC Head of Firearms
July 2025



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